PR
3991
.A1M66

Class PR3991

Book .A1M66

DOBELL COLLECTION

Bat.

MORGAN LE FAYE.

A Play.

IN FIVE ACTS.

1

1108
3614

MORGAN LE FAYE

A PLAY

IN

FIVE ACTS.

PRINTED FOR PRIVATE CIRCULATION.

31-17075

LONDON.

c1859?a

PR3991
.A1M66

205449
'13

PERSONS REPRESENTED.

OBERON, *the Fairy King of Avalon.*
ARTHUR, *King of Britain.*
KING RYENCE *of North Wales*
KING LOT *of Orkney* } *Enemies to King Arthur.*
KING VRYENCE, *Husband to Morgan le Faye.*
KING PELLINORE.
SIR PERCIVAL, *his Son, and Friend to Sir Lanfal.*
SIR LANFAL.
MERLIN, *the Mysterious Seer of Old Romance.*
EWAINE, *a Boy, Son to Vryence and Morgan le Faye.*
SIR ACCOLON, *a Lover of Morgan le Faye's.*
SIR BALIN
SIR BALAN } *two Good Knights, and Brothers*
SIR BALDWIN, *the Chancellor.*
SIR KAY, *the Seneschal.*
SIR ONTZLAKE.
SIR GILLIVER.
HUGH, *a Servant to Sir Lanfal.*
THE DEVIL, FIENDS, DWARFS, FAYS, KNIGHTS, HERALDS, PAGES, SOLDIERS, *&c. &c.*

THE FAIRY QUEEN *of Avalon.*
TRYAMOUR, *her Daughter.*
QUENEVER, *Queen of Britain.*
MORGAN, *King Arthur's Sister, and a great Enchantress.*
THE LADY OF THE LAKE.
FAYS, LADIES, ATTENDANTS, *&c.*

THE FABLE.

The materials for this drama are taken from the romance of "Sir Lanfal," and the celebrated "La Mort d'Arthur." Morgan le Faye is a great enchantress; after a length of servitude to the evil one, and the attainment of such worldly rewards as he is able to bestow, she is led by her mysterious business to thoughts of ambition. One day, when her royal brother is on a visit to her, she applies to her master for this end; and is readily promised aid, but advised, first to free King Arthur of all his honest and virtuous supporters, that she may effect her aim the more completely. This has been already in a great measure done; one virtuous knight only remains, and the test that discovers him, is enough for his destruction. But ere she can sieze the crown, the lady of the Lake, who, on her presentation of Excalibur, had obtained a promise of King Arthur to grant her whatever she should next ask of him, seeing his great danger, demands her desire, and that is, that he should immediately leave his sister's house for Camelot. He does this, and for the time put himself in safety.

Sir Lanfal, who, for long, perseveringly has continued to oppose his good counsel to the pernicious influence of Queen Morgan and others, disgusted by their licentious-

ness, and persecuted by the ill-will of Queen Quenever, resigns his place and leaves, preferring honest privacy to dishonourable service at court. The Fays, who ever honour the virtuous and honest, escort him through the forest with song; and the fair Princess Tryamour takes on herself the employment of administering his consolation.

Not long after his return to Camelot, King Arthur, by the urgent pressing of Merlin, and the suggestions of his now threatening circumstances, looks behind the scenes, and finds that the fair seeming hides what is much worse. He resolves no longer to favour vice and effeminacy, but take to his old and youthful delight of warfare. He entrusts the valuable Excalibur to his traitorous, but unsuspected sister, and hies, with what few forces he can collect, to the support of the noble Pellinore; who, this while, had fearlessly and almost alone withstood the brunt of King Arthur's enemies. The most part of the strutting and talkative, who were of late among the foremost and most distinguished, take to the castle Laxity under the patronage of Morgan le Faye.

Poor, and under the ban of royal disgrace, Sir Lanfal meets with no kind countenance, and one day, on the verge of despair, takes to the forest, with what sad intention I know not, but there he meets with the Queen of Avalon and the Princess Tryamour. They give him horse, and arms, and gold; and what is better, news of King Arthur's taking to the field; but what is best of all that he gets is Tryamour's sweet sympathy. In the height of joy and gratitude he sets forth, and in the evening before the action with the pride of honesty, joins his royal master, who re-

ceives him cordially as one of his truest and most faithful knignts.

In the meantime, Queen Morgan having been disappointed by the intervention of the Lady of the Lake, sets afoot other and more determined schemes to effect her designs. Being in possession of Excalibur, she prepares her bold paramour, Sir Accolon, by stirring him up to the highest pitch of attachment, to become her instrument in a certain feud, deceitfully purposing to oppose him to King Arthur. But this she proposes to reserve to the last, should all the rest fail. A series of treasons are attempted, and they do fail. Her treacherous complicity with the party of King Ryence is defeated by the gallant exertions of Lanfal, prompted by intelligence from Tryamour; the machinations of her devilish art fail against the innate truth and virtue of her brother; and her final stroke, (when the weak and abused king, armed only with a false and brittle sword, is poised against the stout Sir Accolon, provided with Excalibur and its sheath), is circumvented by the faithful Merlin. Although Queen Morgan had arranged it so that the main guilt should be diverted from herself, and fall on the burningly hated Lanfal, whom she, by other means, could never reach, her feelings run so high at the moment of disappointment, and her evil doings had been so completely exposed on the destruction of castle Laxity, that she gives up on the failure of these plots all thoughts of remaining at Camelot, slew her husband, makes a personal attempt on King Arthur, and took unto the forest. Lanfal, on whom the suspicion of all the treasons fell, after overcoming personal temptations of some severity, is tried and condemned to death; but the

timely appearance of Tryamour and the King and Queen of Avalon clears all up; and Sir Outzlake, who was sent in pursuit of Morgan le Faye, gives the finishing touch to the story by his account of her mysterious and dreadful end. Thus all things being made plain, the fays depart, and Lanfal and his royal lord are friends ever after.

ACT I.

SCENE I.—*A Mysterious Hall, in which the Art of Magic is wont to be carried on. A ring is chalked out in the middle of the floor.*

MORGAN *and* FEMALE ATTENDANTS *discovered.*

MORGAN. Have all things been prepared?
MAIDS. All is ready.
MORGAN. Then
Retire ye and take your proper shapes;
Allurement will not now be called for. *Exeunt* MAIDS.
These are the baits have won me wealth and power!
Not one among them but has brought me in
A prince's revenue. Each day has given
Fresh knights to my allegiance, fresh estates
To my exchequer; all by tinselled imps,
Bearing the likeness of fair-featured woman!
The jealous watch dog, if the burglar take
A desirous she will straight forego his duty;
And man too. Both are animals—both flesh;
And rare exceptions are they (though there be
Some) to withstand the inherent weakness. Lanfal,
Who long defied all our entraping arts,
Hath found disgrace and penury for his trouble,
And if I can prognosticate aright
By this hath had still more. A still more strange

Re-enter ATTENDANTS, *as ugly bronzed creatures.*

Example is Sir Balan, who hath been
Long time secured within our bridgeless moat,
But so persists in having his own way,
That with continued challenge and defiance,
He's more than mad! So prosper we, and yet
Our part is incomplete. Riches and power
Without a name and place to crown and grace them,
Are weight and tantalism. One step more,
A fitting sphere wherein I may display
That which I am already, is required;
And if the bond—as far as I can see—
Be worthy my good faith, a second asking
Will not be necessary. Not for all
I would 'twere done. Umph!—what do men not fear?
Their own essential and chief part, their ghost,
They dread most; and not one i' th' hundred, but
Shakes like an aspen to his counterpart,
Some staring crown-capped brother! 'Tis all one.
He whom I call is little more removed
From an alliance, and perhaps, as true
To friend, and moderate of his power
For all his fame. What think ye my small friends
At so much weakness? So perhaps would you.
(*standing in the middle of the ring, with her foot on a cross, she reads her conjuration.*)

Enter the DEVIL.

DEVIL. Most fair and gentle queen, I greet you with
All gentle compliments, and if your grace
Has any business wherein I can serve you,
You'd give a pleasure that I most desire
In the commission; and let me pray
That you may not let slip advantages,
In our discourse, to give me confidence;
Throw off restraint, and treat me as I were
An equal and an honest gentleman.
MORGAN. Your highness is most gracious. Much am I
Beholden to you; yet, do you surmise
Not falsely to suppose me still in want.
You promised in the covenant we made,
Wealth, power, influence, and a hidden rule

On matter still or moving, and your aid
In any project I might take in hand:
I do not plain. Act has been equal word.
But one thing more I ask, and it is this:
The right and style of the British sovereign
I' the stead of my brother Arthur. If it be
In strict conformity with our agreement,
And no loss or intrusion to your highness,
I trust you will admit it?

DEVIL. Surely; we
Are bound to admit of it and yield our aid.
Although 'twere ill to mar so great a prince!
But I have long observed his distant conduct,
And private feelings will enforce themselves,
And have the right. And, madam, I will take
From my general views of retributive justice,
No less than from my personal leanings, the
Entirest joy in herein serving you.
But has your grace prepared for the change?
'Twould not be well to seize and not to hold.
King Arthur has supporters—you know not
What opposition there would be to it.
Here is a test—my sword. Take it unto
The stagnant water of some mouldering church,
And by the change that shall be therewith wrought,
You shall detect your foes. No man may draw't
But is a deadly bar to your desires.
Remove such men, and as the mellow fruit
Of autumn falls unto the gentlest touch,
The crown and sceptre of the British isle,
Shall fall to yours.

MORGAN. Humbly I thank your highness.

DEVIL. Reckon your forces, we will not be wanting.
(MORGAN *swoons—exit the* DEVIL.

MORGAN. Unless to shake and cringe be held in honour,
Stones, trees, and plants are our superiors;
Less firm and stable are we! Let me see,
Is this the sword that has been left?

FAMILIARS. The same.

MORGAN. 'Tis heavy, and most costly. Lay it by.
But for the alteration that it makes
Upon the countenance, 'twere nothing. Pain
Passes away unseen, but marks remain.
Give me a glass. As easily as breath
Upon a pane our favours are effaced
And features changed; so strong are we! No worse?

I fancied I'd assimilated to
His very self! No likeness can be seen.
I care not then, the difficulty's past,
And I will look unto my purposes.
Bring here the weapon, and remain with me;
The rest unto the court as usual. *Exeunt* FAMILIARS.
You heard th' instructions I received for this?
Hie you the distance of some half a mile,
And take a damsel's form, richly beseen,
But of most wayworn look. Be girt with this,
And furnished with some story for excuse,
Seek you the king, and ask for leave to try
If there be any of his knightly court
Can ease you of it. By th' eleventh Rule
Of the famed Order of the Table Round,
They can't refuse you.

FAMILIAR. I will compass it.
Immediately, madam?

MORGAN. Immediately.
While I prepare me—the best way I can—
To join my visitors, and observe th' event. *Exeunt.*

SCENE II.—*A Pleasure Ground. Music at a distance—after a while* KNIGHTS *and* LADIES *in background.*

Enter MERLIN.

MERLIN. A blacker page, th' ominous book of heaven
Did never show; yet it is true, too true,
As plainly to be seen in their own look
And goings on, as in the signs on high.
The court, the heart of the realm,—which should be firm,
Noble, and unimpeachable,—is loose,
Thoughtless, and open unto danger as
An unprotected flock! That which should be
The guardian of the rest egregiously
'S want of self defence! If he, whose word
Diverts the course of searing thunderbolts,
Do help us not, this storm will burst abroad,
And oh, my God! the unsuspecting king,
And all I've loved so much and hoped on—
O, what of them? Ah, me! (*retires.*)

Enter KING ARTHUR *and the* LADY OF THE LAKE, *disguised as a courier.*

L. LAKE. (*in continuation.*) And against the power of so many kings,
If still your highness do not think it time
To bestir you, they must fall.
ARTHUR. Strange language this!
Let Pellinore do that which is his duty,
And on his peril bring me dead or living,
This blustering Ryence—let him look to that.
Can no one speak to me without upbraiding?
L. LAKE. No honest councillor.
ARTHUR. As for King Lot,
I'm sorry he hath taken up the quarrel,
He knows th' offence was not intended.
L. LAKE. Ah,
That was a sad mistake, and full of evil!
But grief is bootless, look unto the present.
And now, as I have played the messenger,
Learn who I am before I do proceed.
ARTHUR. The lady of the lake! Is all this true?
L. LAKE. True; save I come upon my own accord.
Sir, there's a promise that you gave to me
As yet unrealised.
ARTHUR. I recollect,
On the receipt of the invaluable
Excalibur, I promised in return
To grant to you, if in my power it lay,
Whatever you should ask.
L. LAKE. You did my lord.
List then unto the simplest of requests.
'Tis reasonable from mine intelligence;
From other hidden causes that I know of,
And for the which you may consult with Merlin,
'Tis tenfold more enforced. I ask of you,
That ere another hour do elapse,
You leave the land of Gore for Camelot.
ARTHUR. (*smiling.*) It shall be done.
L. LAKE. See to it, and farewell. *Exit.*
ARTHUR. A strange request it is! What meaneth it?
There's something in it. What do we do here,
Gliding from seat to seat, from room to room,
When swords are out and enemies abroad?
Like fat men broken bodied, or sick girls!

There was a time when I did keep my eyes
Wide open to adventure, when my thoughts
Were all of daring and encounters fierce,
And fame and wide spread use were what I reached at:
How rapidly upon the touch of woman,
Are all such things effaced! How readily,
And with what slight excuse we leave the path
Of honour for our ease! Well, well, all have
Their faults and failings; and, their honeymoons!
However, we will now to Camelot.

MERLIN. Within the hour, mark.

ARTHUR. Within the hour.

MERLIN. More pains are taken for King Arthur's weal
Than any other potentate's on earth.
What think you now of the councils of Sir Lanfal?
You have not, sir, in all your fellowship,
A knight so full of manhood and of prowess,
So full of worthiness as he; although
Abused and persecuted unto ruin,
And driven from the court he served so well.

ARTHUR. Speak properly; he was not driven off.
He's gone upon a visit to his father.

MERLIN. His father's dead, and buried in the earth;
And his penury is too much proof of force.
How could he stay, when vice is only honoured
And virtue held at stake? Place him among
What foes you like, but bid him not be tame,
Enforce no criminal complacency,
And he will flinch but little. But, my lord,
Honour he served, and therefore he did leave,
For you have banished honour from your court.

ARTHUR. Sir Lanfal knows not that his father's dead?

MERLIN. Yet will he find it so unto his sorrow.
Think not a life of revelry is great;
Nor that the foppery you gather there—
The insolence in folly—carelessness
Of duty will turn courage in the field;
Nor that their flattering readiness to please
Will aid you equally in your defence.
The dried leaves chased by the breath of autumn
Do yield no less resistance! It is true.
(LADIES *in back ground move in a somewhat lascivious measure to the music.*)
Is this the company or place t' avoid
The stroke of a jealous and provoked fate?

ARTHUR. Well, I will see you at another time.

As for King Ryence, I have small concern;
The rest you speak of—it is merely custom.
You are too scrupulous, see too deeply, Merlin.
MERLIN. I wish you had a little deeper insight. *Exeunt.*

Enter TWO KNIGHTS.

1*st* KNIGHT. He'll join us shortly, heartily as ever. He only wears the hated mask of thought in compliment to the hoary sage—the old physic-bottle and star-reader that's talking with him.

2*nd* KNIGHT. Most like he is telling of Sir Accolon. Merlin's a fast clock, and can always anticipate everybody else by half an hour. But who are these? Fine creatures, by St. George!

1*st* KNIGHT. Arn't they? fresh and supple as never handled fillies; but not so shy and unapproachable!

LADIES *come forward.*

2*nd* KNIGHT. You're right! 'twould be a false and unjustifiable deduction to suppose that they were never handled.

1*st* KNIGHT. Good morrow, ladies! have you heard the news? I'm very sorry, Sir Accolon hath just now been conveyed through the postern insensible, and minus half the blood he ought to have. The gloomy fellow who left us yesterday in such high dudgeon was his opponent, and, as supposed, hath wrought by treachery.

LADIES. No doubt he has.

1*st* KNIGHT. No doubt of it. Was there a feud between them?

1*st* LADY. Oh, Lanfal might have been too sweet on—you know, my lord; or *vice versa*. Anything would do; so vastly pleasant is sword exercise!

1*st* KNIGHT. Not half so pleasant, madam, as a lady's company and conversation; and Accolon, if pleasure were his object, might well have stopped at home. Do you know what entertainments are in store to while away the garish interval till evenfall?

1*st* LADY. Not exactly, sir; but the happy invention of your honoured hostess, you may rely upon it, will provide her guests mentally and bodily with food sufficient to keep them from famishing; that is if the misfortune that has befallen her dear Sir Accolon and its recovery do not employ her attention too closely; but in the meantime, she undoubtedly supposes that

individuals will wait for no formality, but take and help their neighbours to anything and all conceit may choose.

2nd Lady. As we have just now employed ourselves for a spare moment by luxuriating in the noble virtues of the dance.

1st Knight. 'Tis well! if we would make the best use of our lifetime, we must neither despise trifles nor omit the most secondary opportunities.

2nd Knight. I hope never to be so foolish; and I have the same good wish for all my friends, especially the fair and modest portion.

1st Lady. Fear not for them; all creatures know their own wants, and few are they who, when opportunity offers, cater

Enter Sir Kay.

not for themselves. Ladies are far too wise and susceptible!

Sir Kay. Our lord the king desires all his court
To join him in the arcade. He only waits
Your presence to relieve him of more stay,
Ere he depart for Camelot. Make haste,
For there's a marvellous adventure toward.

Several. And what is that, Sir Kay?

Sir Kay. A most fair damsel
Dragging a heavy and more cruel sword,
Hath just arrived and prayed our gracious prince
To test his baronage to find the knight
Whom she hath been foretold shall ease her of it.
Poor soul! I know how far she must travel!
She seeks a chimera—a will-o'-the-wisp—
An extinct animal—an honest man!
On your allegiance go, but have a care,
Provoked indignance do not rise, and mar
Your own gentility at one who dares
To expect in this most famous fellowship
A thing so vulgar and old-fashioned.

1st Knight. But is the king about to leave, Sir Kay?

Sir Kay. He is.

1st Lady. Can you relieve the lady, my good lord?

Exit Sir Kay.

1st Knight. Not I, upon the strict condition.
Allow me, pray.

2nd Knight. (*to the other* Lady.) Accept of my assistance.

Exeunt.

SCENE III.—*Another Part of the Grounds.*

KING ARTHUR *and* COURT, *and a* DAMSEL *begirt with a sword. Enter* MORGAN.

QUENEVER. I wonder what you've called us hither for!
Vagrants are plentiful as blackberries,
And piteous stories more so. What d'you think?
Intelligence has come of some exploit,
The vulgar Ryence in the north has done,
And so much has infected our good lord
That maugre all the claims that we have on him,
He will throw your hospitality in your face,
And expose the happiness of his loving bride
To the chances of fierce war. It shall not be!
MORGAN. I will not speak of whom ye value not;
But what would be the prospect of a queen,
Whose consort left so lightly and so soon?
ARTHUR. Why, good enough, if she remained with you.
What sayest thou? I must to Camelot.
QUENEVER. I will not go—I will not be so rude.
ARTHUR. 'Tis very well—I like a ready answer.
My noble friends, ere we essay to achieve
The honour that this damsel offers us,
Let me inform you that on word received,
I am enforced to leave for Camelot
Immediately; (our queen remains behind
The appointed time) but let no one infer
From my abrupt departure I have not
Enjoyed myself, while here; my thanks are due
Unto my noble host, and unto all
My loyal hailers to this land of Gore:
And, sirs, these words of ours endorse your right
To claim it back from us at Camelot.
Now, my fair damsel, tell to all my court
The reason of your carrying that sword,
And of your coming hither.
DAMSEL. Sir, I thank you.
The heavy sword I bear, most valiant knights,
Was by its good artificer designed
To give me benefit, but until now
Have I had only sorrow and encumbrance,
For till I find a man of stainless life
And perfect soldiership, I still must bear
This heavy burden, and my heavier wrongs.

Oh, that there may be in this noble court
He who shall give me rest! then if he will,
In his great courtesy, accept the adventure,
He shall relieve the world of a lover slayer,
And write his name in the rolls of chivalry.

ARTHUR. This is a marvel, and most piteous,
That such a sword not only should be useless,
But cruelly o'erlabour a poor damsel.
I will essay, not that I do presume
To be the best, but that my barons all
Each after other may take up their turn.

DAMSEL. Sir he who can, may draw it easily.

ARTHUR. You say well. Now assay ye all, my barons;
But take heed of your reputation!

(*all try in vain, and the* DAMSEL *weeps.*

DAMSEL. Alas! I wend in this court there had been
The best knights, without treachery or treason!

ARTHUR. And by my faith, here are good knights, and true
As any in the world; but they have not
The grace to help you at this time, whereof
I am displeased full greatly.

DAMSEL. Ah me!
Then must I to the weary road again
But whether to the right hand or the left
I know not how to turn! the wide world through
Is useless to my overstrained quest.
Ah! woe is me that I was ever born
To suffer from true love, as I have done!
Oh! that I'd died with him who died for me,
For then I should have been, not wand'ring o'er,
Th' inhospitable world companionless,
But by his side i' the quiet curtained grave. (*going.*)

BALIN. Damsel, I pray you of your courtesy,
To suffer me to try. I am a knight,
Although I wear no arms; and one who fears
No other in fair combat.

DAMSEL. Sir, whereas
So many better seeming ones have failed,
'Twere needless you should give me further pain.

BALIN. If you have seen but little of the world,
You know full well good deeds and worthiness
Are not in raiment only; but in man's
Own person lies his manliness and worship;
And many a worthy knight has been o'erlooked.

ARTHUR. He says but sooth; let him assay, fair damsel—
Let him assay—he looks a goodly man.

(BALIN *draws the sword.*

DAMSEL. Truly this is a passing noble knight,
And the best man that I ever yet have found!
Sir, if you ever knew adversity,
Which, as methinks I see some traces of,
Then do I hope the more that you will aid
A poor oppressed maiden in distress.
O gentle, courteous, knight! Oh, promise me
That I may raise my heart and live again!
BALIN. Fair maid, I am a will-less prisoner;
But by King Arthur's leave I would accept
Whatever the adventure led me to.

Enter MERLIN, *with an hour glass, by which he reminds* KING ARTHUR *of the flight of time, and of his late promise to the* LADY OF THE LAKE.

ARTHUR. Sir, make your choice, you more than merit freedom,
For doing that which none of us could do,
Whatever you be more; and as for that,
We'll give you credit until you'd be tried.
In the meantime, blame us less for your late treatment,
Since we were misinformed, and knew you not.
I should have been right sad if this fair damsel
Had left us in the plight in which she came;
I hope that you (and doubt not if it be
Within man's power) will rid her of her foes,
And re-possess her of all lands and rights,
Of whose loss and detention she complains.
BALIN. I thank your highness. I will take my part
As well as I am able. (*aside.*) Let me go,
Unto the foulest corner of the earth,
Where all the noisome gases of decay
Are generated, it would pain no more
Than the degradance of this royal court.
ARTHUR. Farewell, Sir Balin. Now for Camelot!
The horses will take harm to wait so long.
QUENEVER. Come, let us see him safely mounted, Morgan!
Exeunt ARTHUR, *&c.*
MERLIN. So far so good; yet is there more afoot!
This damsel is a servitress of Morgan's,
I know full well, and means no good. Sir Knight,
Let me examine that fair sword of thine.
Thou likest it?
BALIN. I do, 'tis well got up.
MERLIN. And 'tis a sign and proof of thy true Knighthood?
BALIN. I know not that.

MERLIN. Well, sir, the sword looks fair,
And of strong temper, but whence has it come?
Sir, you have pledged your word for the adventure,
But take not this with you. Part with the sword,
Or it will be your death; and more withal,
That of your dearest friend. Whence was it, sir?
BALIN. The famed Lady of Avelion
Contrived it.
DAMSEL. Whence should it be, sir priest?
BALIN. I like it, and I will not part with it,
Whatever be ordained for the bearer;
And so farewell!
DAMSEL. Come, prithee, gentle Knight. *Exeunt.*
MERLIN. Well, go thy ways; there is a world, *thou* knowst,
Encircling us with its thousand ministers,
Ready and willing to assist and cheer,
Defend and raise us all. With it, thy brother,
A younger, but a no less noble Knight,
Hath long held correspondence, and
In evil and in enmity unharmed,
Hath proved its value: so mayst thou, Sir Balin. *Exit.*

SCENE IV.—*The Forest.*

TRYAMOUR *and* ATTENDANTS *with sweet flowers.*

TRY. Hark ye the voices on the balmy air!

SONG.

Sprites of woodland, river, spring,
Hither all your virtues bring.
Ho! a gentle knight draws near,
Worthy all your forest cheer;
Bring him peace and bring him joy,
Hardiness and piety.

What knight is it who calls into his path
Such joyous welcome; whose tall presence wakes
The wood to song? Call hither one of these
Fair welcomers, that we may learn the cause,
And yield our aid. I think it is Sir Lanfal,
Whose virtue and fidelity hath made
Such great report!

Enter FAY.

Is it not he, Sir Lanfal?

FAY. The same, great Princess. He, two days ago,
Was treacherously waylaid, but his good hand
And heart defended him. He journies now
Unwittingly unto a father's grave;
And he is poor and scoffed, and desolate,
But yet abides in truth and confidence.

TRY. We've heard of him; and see he comes! and bears
In sooth a most majestic and calm look;
And young and fair withal! All hail, Sir Knight!
The man of virtue and simplicity
Doth in that light and graceful armour wear
Impenetrable mail. Be clothed thus,
And thou shalt never fail of thy defence.

Enter FAYS *and* LANFAL.

SONG.—FAYS.

Primrose, violet, gem the grass,
Scent the air as he shall pass;
Finch and thrush and cuckoo throng,
To his path with cheerful song;
Crisped leaf and gentle breeze,
Wake your softest melodies!

LANFAL. As when a tender mother doth beguile
Her child of grief; so, as it seems to me
My motherland with soft and gentle looks
Would win me unto joy. O country mine,
Take not such pains with me! but tell me this,
Hast thou behaved well unto my father;
For him I seek, and him I think upon?
Thou must have done so, or wouldst never meet
His son with such fair looks! Ah! I am fond!
I could lie down upon the sunny ground,
And watch the light and heaven aspiring clouds
Glide slowly over me; yes, I could lie
Till sundown, till the leaves were lost in shade,
And still continue looking at the stars
Till dawn should come again and the warm day;
And then find consolation and fresh joy!

TRY. Misfortune is a profit to the wise,

And to the brave a toy. As light and shade
Checquer the fields of May, yet make no harm,
Even such are accidents to noble knights.

LANFAL. Even so they pass as shadows on the fields!
What is it but a story of what was,
And now has gone, as it had never been?
I bore me as a knight and joy in it.

TRY. All things obey the true, save man whose will
Is free to refuse; but if he faithful be,
The rocks will melt, the mountains be removed
At his command; for truth is paramount.

LANFAL. When we can raise ourselves in noble thought,
To nature's greatness and to nature's peace,
How insignificant are all the works
And doings of poor man! how paltry crowns are!
And all the pomp and state to them belonging!
Wherein are we the worse;—canst thou perceive?
The court of Camelot has lost its value,
And memories of my youth come over me!
The cliff of the hawk, the dell of the fawn, the homes
Of the bonniest girls—I'll point them out,
And make them subjects for a hundred tales
As we pass on. No loss, no loss at all!

HUGH. Sir, you have lost your master, and, as I guess,
So much are you the worse.

LANFAL. Than thee, good Hugh!
For a want of master brings a want of wage!
Alas! I fear that I may not surpass
To thee the nothing that is now my master!
But for myself, its no objection Hugh.
There is no poverty but of the heart.
There's no such thing as tyranny i'the world,
Only to him who willingly allows it.
There's no such thing as pain but to the unjust,
But unto him that overweens; him who
Envies and hates and wrongs the laws of truth.
So perfect is the Providence of God!
Hark, in thine ear; I never were so wise—
(Conditioned but that Providence has spared
My aged father, and I ask no more!)
The which I was about to say is this:
Two sorts of life there are, and two results;
Serve one of them, the momentary hig,
And however happy you may seem to be,
It is but bubble-joy and vanity;
But serve the other, the eternal truth,

And however poor, and sick, and desolate,
The farthest star, the coldest stone's a friend.
O for the breeze, the greenwood, and the sky!

FAYS. (*singing.*) Breeze, and bird, and flower, and tree,
An' all the Fays that dwell with ye,
One who has the right to call
Aid and trueage from ye all
Passes by; of all things good
Bring him peace and fortitude. *Exeunt.*

SCENE V.—*A dilapidated Homestead.*

Enter LANFAL, HUGH, DWARF, *and* FAY.

DWARF. Come on, and you will see it for yourselves;
And then let your imaginations spin you
To what extremity you like! Ha! ha!

LANFAL. This is the ancient house I've spoken of.
It scarcely looks the place it used to be;
And yet it is the same, with such a change
As time and some neglect have cast on it.
There is the stable, there the outer kitchen,
And there the brook that runs across the orchard
But the trees are older, and the walls less firm;
And the roof— Why should the roof be broken in!
That part must be unused. Alas! I fear
That my forebodings will be found too true!

HUGH. I fear, my lord, that there is no one in,
It seems so greatly given to neglect.
There is a person coming down the way
Perhaps may give some explanation.

LANFAL. I might have kept a correspondence with him,
And thereby been advised of his position;
I should not then have come too late. And yet,
I understood not there was any danger.

Enter TRYAMOUR, *in the guise of a peasant girl.*

HUGH. Pray do you know to where they have removed
Who occcupied this house?

TRY. Sir, do you mean
The good old soldier who hath lived here?

LANFAL. The same! Where is he?
TRY. In a better place.
LANFAL. And where is that? Why hath he left a home
My mother graced so fairly and so long?
TRY. Sir, when his frame became incapable,
As is inevitable unto age,
His faithful soul was taken to a realm
Where its utility might not be lost.
LANFAL. Then have I not a father? Is he dead?
And shall I never more behold his face?
TRY. If he of whom we speak were such to you,
His body rests beside the church of Christ,
And his better part hath gone unto the sphere
Provided for the spirits proved in truth;
And fancy only can his figure trace,
Until you join him there. (LANFAL *is overpowered.*)
DWARF. O, wondrous fool!
'Twas nothing to him, when he knew it not,
Why then should it be more than nothing now?
(FAYS *advance with sympathy.*
TRY. Think not Sir Knight that those who may depart
Are worse off than the living! The reward
Is ever made superior to the toil;
An' the crown of holiness is a greater gift
Than that of Princedoms. Oh, think not the grave
Has swallowed consolation! It has not
The power to destroy the smallest part
Of that allied to truth; it cannot take
One hope away from faith. Cheer then your heart,
You have not lost your father; he exists
In freer, nobler being; even now,
He looks down from on high upon his son,
And bids you serve him less by shedding tears,
Than by the following in his path of truth
And justice.
LANFAL. I will obey; 'twould not avail
However I should weep. Beside Christ's church
Thou sayst that he is laid?
TRY. It is there; but
Fair sir, let me direct you unto whom
(FAYS *points upwards.*
Befriends the just, and assures him from a loss;
In fortune or in faith, in life or death;
Whether he do depart or he be left.
LANFAL. I thank thee, damsel, thou hast spoken well. *Exit.*

DWARF. Ay, go thy ways and hug the stone that's there,
Or like the watch dog bay unto the stars! *Exit.*
TRY. Poor Lanfal! Ah, thou art a noble man!
I never gave assistance unto one,
With half the ardour that I do to thee;
Thou'st more attraction in adversity,
More beauty and more worship in misfortune
Than ever I in likelier circumstances
Yet have found. I will precede his steps
And deck the grave with sweet head drooping flowers,
That shall disarm it of its power to pain.
I never met, nor ever shall again,
So fair a knight, so brave and so broad hearted. *Exit.*

SCENE VI.—*The Hall at Camelot.*

ARTHUR, *disguised, and* VRYENCE *are discovered observing the* COMPANY, *which, from time to time forms into groups of weak, frivolous, or sensual* CHARACTERS.

ARTHUR. There's only too much truth in Merlin's tale.
You know from Pellinore to Balin we
These six months last have lost full many knights,
Who've left us only on too slight pretences.
This is the reason on't; no doubt of it!
(SIR KAY *is seen treating a group, not undeservedly, with some scorn.*
That batch of chatterers—what good are they?
And such are now so numerous that it is
But here and there you meet with any one
To speak without a smirk! Suppose a case,
And ask their council; what could you obtain?
Call for their aid, and what could they perform?
This folly is a greater nuisance, sir,
Than open treason; I dislike it more.
It is the only underplot there is;
The key to all the foreign ridicule
That has been passed upon us. I have marked
That people speak without the smallest meaning,
And act without the slightest principle;
Their knightly deeds have given place to words,
Their simple words to diffuseness and to falsehood;

And they have not security among them
T' ensure a sergeant's post. Is Morgan here?
VRYENCE. No doubt, my lord, about the upper end.
ARTHUR. Go, draw her thence, I want to speak with her.
I'll take a slight precaution while I may; *Exit* VRYENCE.
And yet not very slight, so slight are they
'Gainst whom I take 't—however seems the phrase,—
For monkeys are as mischievous as men. *Exit.*
(MORGAN *and* ATTENDANT *come forward.*
MORGAN. *(in answer.)* Mine influence! but didst thou see not, girl,
Who fain would put despising face upon't?
Now couldst thou not come over yonder knight?
ATTENDANT. Ay, by the very means that he contemns,
Or I am much deceived.
MORGAN. Away and try!
Wondrous foolish are they! wondrous sport!
Mine influence! Well, let it hide awhile;
Ye have a bias ye shall never quit,
Go where ye may; and one time ye shall know
To what extent ye lie at my disposal!
(*another* ATTENDANT *speaks with* MORGAN.
I must ingratiate myself with this,
Or it will turn against me; but not I
Shall stoop too long unto dissimulation.
He comes this way. *(retires.)*

Re-enter ARTHUR *and* VRYENCE.

VRYENCE. She is not there, but was
Scarcely a moment since.
ARTHUR. Ah—list to me!
I grant that they are quick in their conceptions,
Attentive to the ladies, talkative,
Can put a feather in the cap, and strut—
But what would be the advantage of all that
If I should come to want them? Nothing, sir.
This chamberism that is so accomplished,
This reaching after fineness and observance,
This leaky wiseness, that is never spent,
This self-sufficient ignorance that can talk,
Are just the opposites to the qualities
That make a proper man and soldier; and
Are incompatible with social order,
Martial discipline, or Christian duty.

Yes—mark you, there is more behind the view
Than we shall ever learn. The tapestry
Is made to hide the wall, and great display
Implies a great defect.
VRYENCE. You're right my lord.
What I have seen and heard confirms it all.
ARTHUR. 'Tis my belief. What lies within the scope
Of our public function, shall be altered.
But let us toward the bottom of the hall,
I want to find my sister. *Exeunt.*
MORGAN. Very well;
You shall have the opportunity anon,
And the benefit of my experience!

Enter KAY *and Morgan's* LADY ATTENDANT.

But here's a couple I must listen to!
Each is a dupe and prize unto the other—
Who'll win? I'll venture odds against Sir Kay;
A thousand unto one. The imp's the game!
(*the* COUPLE *pass away.*
So stable are they! his disdain is gone,
And ere they shall have passed the second time,
It will have passed unto admiration!

Re-enter ARTHUR *and* VRYENCE.

But here's my dupe withal! What odds on us?
ARTHUR. Here is our sister, who has found me out;
Pray give me leave awhile.
VRYENCE. Assuredly. *Exit.*
MORGAN. What is the reason for disguise my lord?
Some whim or other, I suppose again?
ARTHUR. I want thee, Morgan; step aside with me.
The defamation that hath been so frequent,
Hath urged me to look beneath the surface;
And I have found it nearly as is said.
All is not gold that glitters. I have been
A king of puppets, not of men and soldiers.
The noble use of arms is put aside,
And nothing but the smile and pretty word,
And tittivations alamode are thought of;
Nothing but the art of coxcombry.
MORGAN. O, you've a fit of awkwardness upon you!
ARTHUR. If they can rule the gait and bend the arm,

And give the proper O, and go again,
They know enough of language or of action!
Come here, Sir Kay, what are you after there?

KAY. Most humbly, sir—

ARTHUR. Let's have no more; don't make
Yourself, the lady, and your master fools.
Begone, sir, and conduct you as a knight,
And as mine officer—begone, I say;
But hark ye, Seneschal take down the lights,
And let the company disperse—it's time.

KAY. It shall be done, my liege.

ARTHUR. It's my command;
I'll let them know the cause of it myself. *Exit* KAY.

MORGAN. Brother, you're acting in the strangest way—
What is the reason of it? I will call
The queen unto us, and discover you.

ARTHUR. Thou shalt not, Morgan; stay, for this is not
The subject I have come to talk about;
I will disclose it to the queen myself.
'Twill do them good to go to bed betimes,
If they will sleep, and get up earlier.

MORGAN. Most true, my lord; what next?

ARTHUR. A favour, Morgan.
Thou know'st I have a sword I value much;
I would preserve it; and to put it from
The reach of risk, I would confide't to thee.

MORGAN. At least you know your sister is trustworthy.

ARTHUR. It is the gift of the Lady of the Lake,
Whose priceless qualities thou must have heard of.
The blade's endowed to conquer, and the sheath
Preserves one from all loss of blood and weakness,
Although the stroke might else have given death.
Now I have taken on me some suspicion,
And these are dearer to me than my crown.

MORGAN. Well, you shall find me faithful as a sister,
Whose bonds are stronger than the bonds of wedlock,
Unstrained, and unaffected, and untried,
Whatever circumstances may betide.

ARTHUR. I doubt it not. Come for it on the morrow;
For though I think after arrangements here,
Or as old Merlin calls it, some purgation,
To take into the battle field again,
I do not wish for the advantage always,
But only in peculiar times of trial,
And therefore I deposit it with you,
As one of the same blood whom I can trust,

To keep it for me till such times may come.
MORGAN. I will not fail!
ARTHUR. Enough! I'll to the fools! *Exit.*
MORGAN. Why should I fail so opportune an aid?
It comes as pat as if it were designed
By favouring stars to draw out my design!
This sword shall be the midwife to my purpose!
The inconstant friend of office and presumption—
The intermittent love is not for me;
The check and smile—th' approval and the scorn
Are alike distasteful and repayable,
However, we may seem to bear them, brother.
Thou art too simple in the lore of things—
Their causes and effects; thou know'st not me. *Exit.*

ACT II.

SCENE I.—*Court of a Castle.*

SIR BALAN, *walking to and fro—on the walls above are seen many* FOLLOWERS OF PLEASURE, KNIGHTS, *and* LADIES.

1*st* KNIGHT. What dost thou, Balan, striding to and fro,
Growling and restless like a caged beast?
Come hither and enjoy thyself before
Thy life be spent, and learn how foolish 'tis
To fret oneself for nothing—dost thou hear?
2*nd* KNIGHT. Come and enjoy yourself with wine and women,
Hilarity and ease, and all the sweets
Of sociality and mutual favours;
And be not such a muff! What say you, eh?
BALIN. Sirs, leave the shelter of those battlements
And meet me on the open green sward here
And you and I will prove who is the best;
And till you do this, think yourselves but knaves.
I'm doomed to be among them, but as long
As I can breathe a word or wield a weapon,
I'll give them chellenge. Fate may point our course
Through pitfalls, mazes, and temptations dire,
But not the strongest influence it boasts,
From earth or stars, or any other region;
Can o'errule our resolution;
Nor shall. *Exit.*

Enter BALIN *and* DAMSEL, *crossed by* MERLIN, *as a plain old countryman.*

MERLIN. Balin le Savage, thou hast past
Thy bounds; take heed and work thyself no woe.
I warn thee for the third time, and the last.
DAMSEL. Sir, here is he whom you have pledged your word
To fight or yield to; make your choice of which;

But bear in mind eternal shame or honour
Depends upon your course.

BALIN. I know not that;
I lack not cause to think that you are false;
But I will keep my word, or live or die,
Until I have more light vouchsafed me;
For Heaven knows that I am weary grown
Of this base world, and long to take my rest.

Enter BALAN.

BALAN. Address you to the combat!

BALIN. I am ready.

(*they fight and give each other many mortal wounds*, BALAN *at length retires and lies down from weakness—shouts from the castle.*

What knight art thou, for until have I
Never found one to match me?

BALAN. Sir, my name,
Is Balan, and the younger brother to
Balin le Savage, whom I searched for
When I came here. Now, sir, you have my name.

BALIN. Alas! that ever I should see this day!

(*falls in a swoon*—BALAN *creeps to him and takes off his helm, but knows him not*—BALIN *again revives.*

Oh, brother, thou hast slain me! and I thee!
Was ever such ill-fortune?

BALAN. Is it thou,
For whom I sought so painfully? Well, Balan,
Thou dost deserve thy death for championing
A crew like this. They have imprisoned me
These six months'; and I have defied them ever.
Who dared to uphold their evil ways, have died;
Although they still, against all chivalry,
Of which they have no jot, have kept from me
Their castle and my rights. Oh, brother mine,
This doth embitter that which else were welcome!

BALIN. I knew you not, nor yet these wicked people.
I fought for my good word pledged to the king;
And nor for them, nor with ill-will to you.
Nay, I have sought for you, as you for me;
But through injustice I was called to court,
Stripped of my arms and broken from the quest.
Then did this damsel, feigning great distress,
Cruelly single me for your opponent;
And thus have we been sacrificed, Balan!

BALAN. No force; forgive me what I said—farewell!
BALIN. Forgive *me*, Balan. Oh, I knew full well
Misfortune should o'ertake me, but alas!
Knew not that I should bring it on my brother. (*they die.*
DAMSEL. Thus do we lead the little lambs to death!
The little gentle lambs! They must be doing,
And 'tis as easy to waylay their course
And lead them to their ruin, as to utter
An empty precept to the contrary!
And yet not always; now had I full nearly
Committed my first failure! 'Twas all but!
His awkwardness was riping to a breach
Of confidence and connexion; but too slowly,
And gently shall my potent mistress pat me
For doing of her errand! What of that?
Here comes a band more willing to be led!
A smile, a feather, or a rustling skirt,
Or ivory ancle, they would follow farther,

Enter KNIGHTS *and* LADIES.

Than soldiers do the troth-beplighted flag!
See gentle friends, a diamond cuts a diamond!
KNIGHT. Most excellently! Now have we got rid
Of him who was an eyesore to us all!
But is our champion slain?
DAMSEL. Ay, fortunately!
KNIGHT. How fortunately?
DAMSEL. For he was like the other,
And knew not he was fighting with his brother.
KNIGHT. Is that it? ho! then let them rot together;
And come, fair damsel, we must honour ye
For taking so much pains for our relief.
Exeunt with shouts.

Enter MERLIN.

MERLIN. Here lie two of the best—the noblest knights
Of all the world, slain by each other's hands,
And yet not wittingly, for they were brothers.
But though they die, their fame shall never die;
And we who live are losers and not they.
Thine aim, good Balan, to destroy this castle
And its ill customs was most honourable;
But out of reach of any save a king,
Which thou wast not, and honourably thou failedst;
And thou the sole true knight of Arthur's court,

Who, for thy word's sake, 'gainst all risk and warning,
(And alas, I could no more than what I did!)
Followed the quest that thou had'st taken up,
And therein slew thy brother—did it not
Intently, and art therefore not to blame,
But keep'st unmarred claim for all our worship.
So fare ye well, and softly rest your souls—
Unmatched in worth as in calamity!
Out of one womb ye came, and in one grave
Shall ye be lain; and to the end of time
The good shall yield their prayers—the brave, their pity
As they do hear the story of your deaths.

Exit with dead bodies.

SCENE II.—*Hall of State.*

KING ARTHUR *(eyeing* MORGAN,*)* MERLIN, QUENEVER, MORGAN, &c.—*frivolous levity of* COURTIERS.

MERLIN. *(in continuation.)* You want the sternness that can bear itself,
Exposed to all the inclemency of winter,
Unflinching, unaffected, and erect.

SIR KAY *brings in a* HERALD.

You want the firmness that can look upon
The sweeping battle with consideration.

ARTHUR. And all is loose, loose, loose—in the extreme.
That's true enough, but the other—it is nonsense.
Now speak, Sir Herald, what thou hast to say?
Thou comest from Ryence, of North Wales, who hath
The boldness to invade us;—canst thou tell
Why he hath ventured on this provocation?

HERALD. I come, sir, from the sovereign of North Wales,
Who sends to the high renowned King Arthur greeting,
As lowly as becomes his own position,
And fairly as becomes King Arthur's name.
But not foreknowing of your grace's question,
My royal lord thus only bade me say:
That he hath overcome eleven kings;
All who, in token of submission,

Have yielded him their beards. With these he thought
To have purfled him a mantle, but there lacks
Material for a little space, and he
Hath found himself enforced to seek for more;
Wherefore am I sent by my royal lord
For that wherewith to finish it; to wit,
To obtain King Arthur's beard; which, not forthcoming,
He swears by his own prowess, and the gods,
To invade King Arthur's lands, and burn and slay,
And leave not till he also have your head.
As earnest of the message that I bring,
His highness hath returned from the north,
With what enforcement and with what success
Your own released knight may tell you of.

(*astonishment among* COURTIERS.

ARTHUR. Now thou hast said thy message, and in truth,
It is the lewdest and most villanous
That ever man heard given to a king;
Also may'st thou see my beard is young—
Full young as yet to make a purfle of.
Tell this unto thy lord. I owe no bow
To him nor any other ruler, but,
His mighty self and all his faithless colleagues
Shall be right fain to yield on both the knees
That which he now presumes to claim of me;
Else shall they cease to live. I see your king
Met never yet a worthy man; but tell him,
For this most shameful message he has sent,
I'll have his head or homage before long.
That is mine answer; hie thee off with it;
And doubt me not, for I'll confirm it all.

A COURTIER. By mine oath, but he shall suffer for it.

(*commotion among* COURTIERS—KAY *takes* HERALD *out.*

MORGAN. Sir, let the requital of this churlishness
O'ertake and supersede the report of it,
That you may suffer nothing in your fame.

QUENEVER. I never knew so scandalous a message.
I will not ask you longer to forbear,
But go along with you, and if I cannot
Help in his chastisement, I'll see it done.

ARTHUR. What says the knight whom he has spoken of?
What is thy name, Sir Knight?

KNIGHT. My gracious liege,
My name is Naram, and our family
Is not unknown to many who are here.

ARTHUR. Is this the truth the messenger has told?

KNIGHT. It is, my liege, as far as the report
Of what has been. Your army is besieged
In the Town of Bedegraine by such a foe,
That it is likely to be sacrificed,
If it be not relieved from without.
King Ryence and King Lot came down upon us,
As numerous as the saplings of a forest;
My lord, King Pellinore proceeded there,
And on the second day was closely circled,
And cut off from communication;
Myself, and every other messenger,
Attempting to escape, being killed or captured:
And thus remained they when we left the camp.
COURTIER. This may be called a serious business, sir.
(*consideration among* COURTIERS.
ARTHUR. And dost thou know this Ryence of North Wales?
KNIGHT. I know him as a good man of his body,
As few men living; an' passing proud withal.
He has vowed to his heathen gods, to extirpate
All Christian princes from the isle of Britain;
And doubt you not, he can and will, my liege,
Make war on you with mighty puissance.
MERLIN. Thou sayst sooth; I know it to be so.
'Tis time, sir knights, that you aroused yourselves;
Your comrades have behaved as valiant men,
But they can not do things impossible;
And it is hard, when they have done their duty,
To die unconsequentially, uncared for.
And mark you, there's a terminus to favour.
The sufferance of Providence is long,
But justice cannot pretermit its part;
And if you will refuse the required effort,
Omit the last precaution, you are lost.
ARTHUR. My lords and knights, I was advised of this;
And therefore was it that I summoned you.
We do repent us of our long inaction:
However pleasure titillate the fancy,
It adds but little to the worth and worship;
However lightsome it may seem to be,
It wastes more strength than lusty labour wears;
And however fair it looks in certain lights,
It has another side as loathsome and
As much to be avoided and contemned;
This I have learnt and I would now amend.
I did not think our fame had got so low.
What say you, sirs, unto this revelation?—

What think you of this purflemaking king?
Have ye no thirsting vengeance in the throat,
No grasping eagerness upon the hand,
Reactionary to this flagrant outrage?

ACCOLON. I'll stake my life to tell it fully back,
If I may have the chance to do it; and,
That chance shall not be lacked from cause of mine.

1*st* KNIGHT. And I.

2*nd* KNIGHT. And I, the scoundrel!

BALDWIN. Give the word;
And thousands are they ready to collect,
And treat him plenteously.

VRYENCE. We must attempt.

ARTHUR. Do then no more respond? E'en be it so.
'Twere well if they would now make good their words,
Who scorned Sir Lanfal's tale so lavishly.
But do as you may tend, I pray you not;
For go with me who will, abide who will,
No more for my default shall my subjects suffer.
Let those who are as eager as submissive,
Immediately prepare themselves to go
To form a vaward to the expedition;
And I will write to my barons who are absent,
To meet us on the march, and ere again
We give ourselves to censure, we will rid
One fellow of his boasting. (*concern among* COURTIERS.)

QUENEVER. So I hope,
And I'll accompany you unto the field.

ARTHUR. Thou wilt indeed!

QUENEVER. I will, if I be slain.
For I could not enjoy a greater pleasure,
Than have the pagan butchered in my sight;
Nor have a greater gift bestowed on me,
Than his dissevered head.

ARTHUR. Well, rest assured,
For we are yet sufficient for the task.

MERLIN. Ay, be content; we'll see what can be done.

Exeunt ARTHUR, QUENEVER, *&c.*

Let others who refuse to take a part,
Cleave still to the disease infected bed
Of indolence; and gurgling every breath,
Unconscious lie until too late to wake.
Let others with infatuated grasp,
Embace the damsel that is pleasure hight;
And when all their opportunities are gone,
Awake unto her falsehood and her bane.

There is but one way that is safe and right,
And all must prove its due appreciation,
In pain or happiness, in gain or loss.
Exit—Sir Kay *and his* Damsel *go out together.*

SCENE III.—*Another Room in the Palace.*

Enter Arthur *and* Morgan.

Arthur. I can't see any reason you should stay,
But I shall leave thee Morgan, with the sword
An' expect it will be safe.
Morgan. Of course it will.
What need of any repetition?
I tell you, brother, I am tired of this.
Some one has been stuffing you with doubts
Against mine honesty, or heaven knows what.
If you believe them, tell me and I'll leave;
If you do not believe them, let them leave.
For one thing or the other I will have.
Arthur. And so thou mak'st a tiff at my first words!
I always have a cause for what I say.
The contumely thou threw'st upon Sir Lanfal
Was quite uncalled for; the neglect and wrong
Thou dost unto thy husband, are apparent.
That I have told thee of these things and others,
Claims no excuse of me: they called for it.
If thou should'st think that things have no effect,
Thou art mistaken: I may pass them by;
But they remain as witnesses against thee.
Morgan. An' so now have they collected strength enough
To turn your good opinion to abuse!
Arthur. No—but it behoves us to be careful
When we are acting under disadvantage.
Morgan. I've answered every charge, as you know well,
Upon the spot that bruited it; but, sir,
I've also thought of late, that your neglect
Began to cry out somewhat for reaction:
You listen too much to mine enemies.
Arthur. I've ever ta'en thy part, except to thee.
Thou art my sister, and thy reputation
Affects me as mine own, and I do claim

A part in its defence as well as thou.
All that I wish for, is to make thee careful.
But I can spare no time. Thou hast the sword,
And knowst how much I value it; now see
That it be safely kept; and, as thy brother,
I'll warrant thee an honourable place.

MORGAN. Indeed, my lord!

ARTHUR. I am surprised thou
Should'st stay behind when Quenever proceeds. *Exit.*

MORGAN. Thy sword is safe, see thou unto thyself.
It seems that thou art also on the point
Of changing thy behaviour. I will gain
A march upon thee, brother; I have done't.
And with the assistance of Excalibur,
I shall not need thy gracious offices.
But first—ah, here he comes! My instrument
Is true and loyal to the king as me,
And, therefore, must be wielded skilfully.

Enter ACCOLON.

ACCOLON. Madam, your poor, fond lover, could not leave
Without again saluting your fair hand;
And thankless shall I be when I omit,
One moment in the year, to think of her,
Who gives me life, and sweetens it withal.

MORGAN. I'm glad to see you; did you meet the king?

ACCOLON. I did, and he looked black as thunder on me:
He does suspect.

MORGAN. I hate him, Accolon;
He does.

ACCOLON. He knows he's done things similar,
And cannot take it so extremely ill.

MORGAN. But he pretends he has amended now.

ACCOLON. No matter, I will burnish his opinion
In the ensuing field; till when, we'll brave't.
Adieu!

MORGAN. Prepare for Arthur's hatred, Accolon,
If you do value me or my connexion;
For one you must forego.

ACCOLON. O say not so!
For you are both bound up within my heart,
That the withdrawal of either would be fatal.
Some day may solve the riddle; let us hope.

MORGAN. You say right, my good friend. Be strong of heart;

I shall be on the field, but secretly;
Till when, farewell.

ACCOLON. Farewell, my noble queen.
Be sure to come, and I will then believe
And doubt no more of your celestial nature,
And in all things, save one, (but not in that)
Behave me as to a divinity. *Exeunt.*

SCENE IV.—*The Forest.*

Enter LANFAL, HUGH, *and* DWARF.

DWARF. If the gay court do give the windy wold,
What will the windy wold and mouldy grave?

LANFAL. I will not take these horses any further.

DWARF.. Ah! has he made it out already, think ye?

LANFAL. Come hither, Hugh, for I would speak to thee.
Thou hast accompanied me for many a day,
And the greater the privations we have suffered,
The merrier hast thou been, but not the less
Am I embound in duty to relieve thee.
The high and fortunate may presume on things
The wretched are a great deal more in want of,
But have no right to claim.

HUGH. What, my good lord?

LANFAL. Listen, my good fellow, I will tell thee.
Thou knowst how I was treated at the court;
How I departed thence to see my father,
On a pretence, much better than the fact;
How I dispensed my money at Carleon;
How I was spurned and suspected there;
And how I left, still followed by thy service,
And took unto the free and open country,
Thinking to live as a son of nature might,
An independent life and unobtrusive. But
Thou know'st—for we experience it yet—
How we've been watched and goaded; how all things
Are bound and barred and rivetted from strangers;
And I could not return thy services.
Day after day I thought of separation,
But could not break it unto thee, good Hugh.
Thus circumstanced, I called on Sir Alan:

Not to proffer any great request,
But part in languor, part in carelessness ;
Remembering also that I once had saved him ;—
Thou knowst at Carlech ?—

HUGH. Yes, yes, my lord.

LANFAL. And that
He might be even glad to see me. But,
The curse of expulsion had arrived there.
I marked the features of his selfishness ;
And only took his very liberal offer,
To lend us horses for a day or two,
If we would take good care of them, for this
Purpose, Hugh—
That we may have a way to separate.
I'll take them now no further ; do thou, Hugh,
Return with them, but ere thou goest, let
Us bid farewell. Here is a letter that
Will get thee service.

HUGH. O my noble lord,
Do not condemn me unto an expulsion
Without a cause ; you know how bad it is.
I could not live in any other service.
If you would on some private enterprise
And would not have me with you—tell me when,
And in the farthest country of the earth,
I'll meet you faithfully. But pray you not
To punish me so hardly for my profit.

LANFAL. If it were not for thine own profit, Hugh,
It should not be at all. I know no fault,
For thou hast ever served me too well.
'Tis I am guilty of the misdemeanour ;
Not only for providing thee no pay,
But for my sullen and unthankful ways.
Thou wilt have seen, and all the world confirms it,
That I am now unfit for company.

HUGH. Not so, my lord. There's not a prince on earth,
An he should want the service of a man,
But would be glad to have you at his side.
But I will not intrude my simple council.
Whatever you should do, wherever go,
Were right to me ; and peradventure sir,
I might alleviate with my attendance,
Th' annoy and inconvenience of the road ;
Having been more accustomed to rough fare.

LANFAL. Not much more, Hugh. But I had rather part,
For thou will do much better with another.

HUGH. Not I, my lord. Defer it for a while ;
Perchance I may have more employment, and
You will not find me so much in your way.
In the meantime, while I have none, I can not
Have any claim for pay ; which, good my lord
I beg of you to mention never more.
LANFAL. Then thou art still content? It cannot be,
Unless thou art a species in thyself.
But I'll defer it to another time,
And as thou say'st, something may put up.
Take back the borrowed horses ne'ertheless ;
And see that thou be very careful with them!
HUGH. All right, my lord.
LANFAL. I'll wait thee hereabout.

Exit, HUGH.

Enter QUEEN *of Fairy, &c.*—DWARF *disappointed.*

Would he have been so faithful to me now
If I had daily thought and built upon him,
And trusted upon his unknown decision?
It seemeth hard, but I must be excused,
I never yet met what was worthy trust.
If you should launch yourself on billowy pleasure,
And gain the strongest, clearest stream thereof,
Assured of being intensely happy thus ;—
You would find yourself deceived and disappointed.
Or should you build on promises of friends
A beauteous structure of content and love,
And honour—the hour that you would wait
To realise your hope, would be the one
Wherein you'd reap the bitterest of feelings ;
For you would wait and wait and find them false.
And I have learnt, too, if we turn from man,
And th' exciting pleasures that he makes himself,
And cast our minds on the fairly furnished world,
Thinking that its nobleness and beauty
Being fixed, with heed, would ever yield to us
The joy that it has given all at times ;
There also do we find ourselves deceived.
I did not think that I could come so low.
QUEEN. What man art thou, thus weary of thy life,
Demurring thus at everything on earth?
Why dost thou place thy confidence on things,
Without a calculation of support?
The wood will yield thee fuel, but not food ;

The river water, but not clothing; and
If thou would have both warmth, and drink, and bread,
To wood, and stream, and field thou must apply.
Thus various wants are variously appeased;
But well thou know'st, or once didst know, Sir Knight,
That nothing earthly satisfies the soul.
A brighter world, unseen by the outward eye,
But illumined by the rays of fairer light,
Provides an entertainment for the soul.
Give thou a time to pleasure and to friendship,
To manhood and the wondrous works of nature,
But like the pine tree grows unto the sun,
Grow ever to the radiance of truth;
And every circumstance that thou shalt meet with
Shall give thee pleasure, and assist thy purpose.

LANFAL. While we are sad and look around for aid,
No aid is to be found; all are strange; but,
If we could raise our eyes to something else,
Could pass the line of expectation,
And leave below both help and disappointment,
They'd flock around us with surpassing zeal,
And press us with their favours. But not now;
Excepting only this true-hearted Hugh.

QUEEN. (*coming forward.*) What man art thou, so lonely and forlorn;
And so embroiled thou canst not see aright?

LANFAL. Madam, an honest man; who suffers from
The fellow-fleecing practice of the world.

QUEEN. Why talk'st thou of the world? what's that to thee?
Does not the pine, regardless of the rocks,
Shoot up erect; and does it not so well?
Is it not noble and symmetrical
From every side thou mak'st the point of view?

LANFAL. It ever grows uprightly, heedless of
A rich or rocky ground—a rough or even;
And fromthat ground, by its embracing roots
Draws str ength and nourishment to do so: yes.

QUEEN. You let your reason stoop unto your feelings;
And thus become, according to your leave,
The inefficient help that you complain of.
If you are sad, the world is full of sorrow,
Poverty, scorn, wrong; and you the butt of all,—
Repelled by the writhing wretchedness below,
Scorned by the supercilious above!
If you are happy, all the world does smile,
And teems upon you your reflected joy!

Look up to Heaven, fix thine eye on truth,
And devote thyself to diligence and virtue,
And thou shalt not be any more referred,
Nor fail encouragement; but all things shall
Subserve unto thy pleasure and thy progress:
And talk not any more about the world.

LANFAL. Most noble madam, you, in sooth, say wisely;
And if I had the means to begin again,
I'd leave the world to its petty purposes,
And take an independant higher course;
But seemingly I am to be beholden
For very being unto these same others.

QUEEN. Thou dost not see into the stores of nature:
Virtue hath more friends than it can reckon.

LANFAL. Madam, I am delighted with your words,
No less than by your noble company.
I'll give ye an instance to substantiate
How we have sometimes friends we cannot reckon.
Perhaps you met a fellow on your way,
Of careless humble guise and sturdy look—
If so you did, fair lady, let me tell you
That selfsame person is a properer man
Than many cased in armour. As you say,
He looks to what is right and cares no more;
He values neither poverty nor shame
Against the true affection for a friend;
And strange as it is fortunate for me.
I have another instance to the point.

QUEEN. And what is that, Sir Knight?

LANFAL. I had a father;
Who not long since departed from this life,
And by a little church beside Carleon,
Was laid to rest until the final day.
I was too late, and only came to find
Him in the closed grave, an' bespeak him there.
Sad was the converse held beside the tomb;
For light had been the masses for his soul,
And I had nothing to procure them with;
But some one, with a sympathising heart,
Hung on the cross sweet wreaths of lovely flowers!
I never went there, ladies, but I found,
The kindly tokens fresh and still renewed!
Therewith I knew my father's weal was cared for,
And only sought to know this unknown friend.
I must not wholly leave the world for this.
I could exhaust it to return that deed,
And still account myself as much in debt.

QUEEN. Beware, Sir Lanfal, of a faithless trust!
Retires to ATTENDANTS.
TRY. You need not, Knight; I am that friend of yours;
I made the wreaths that hung upon the stone;
But rule yourself—I'll find a time for speech.

QUEEN *returns, with armour.*

QUEEN. Here are the means to re-begin, Sir Lanfal—
A set of weapons, and a suit of armour,
And herewithal a never failing purse.
Now, many circumstances wait on thee—
The Town of Bedegraine is sacked and lost;
King Pellinore and all his followers
Are pent up in the castle by King Ryence;
And thitherward King Arthur's on the march.
LANFAL. Has he, then, aroused from his stupor?
And Pellinore beleaguered? is it true?
QUEEN. Confide in me, I tell no lies, sir!
LANFAL. Madam,
I did not think that you were doing so;
But by my faith, I know not what I say.
What is the distance? would that I were there!
And yet it is a most ill chosen time.
QUEEN. What business hast thou on thy hands besides?
LANFAL. None, madam! but—you *wish* that I should *go?*
BOTH. Decidedly!
QUEEN. I'm giving thee the means!
Here is the purse, if it be worth acceptance.
I tell thee that King Arthur's in the field,
And if thou would be one of his supporters,
On with this armour, and assume some haste,
For thou art only not too late to join him.
(LANFAL *arms himself.*
Hereby there are two horses for thy use,
Already harnessed and equipped for war:
Take one thyself, give th' other to thy man,
And Merlin will conduct thee on thy way.
And see that thou fulfil to every part
The course marked out in thine adversity.
LANFAL. Madam, by God's grace I will not fail
To do what seemeth right, and do it well.
QUEEN. I know the conquests of thy past behaviour;
But there are other trials in thy path—
Greater, deeper, more insidious;
And if thy virtue therein still be proof,

I'll find thee a reward commensurate.
(Yes, thou may'st look unto my daughter, there).
Adieu, Sir Knight—adieu, thy task's before thee.
LANFAL. But oh! how shall I render to you thanks
For this unlooked for service? Shall I go,
And not acknowledge even with a word?
(TRYAMOUR *beckons for silence.*
Oh, that the time allowed; or that you could
Interpret what is here! Then would you know
The poor man's purse was not in want of coin!
His only coin alas!
QUEEN. We can; and will
Accept that coin of yours in payment, Lanfal.
LANFAL. May heaven help me then, and send the time
Wherein I may return you some requital.
But will you not inform me unto whom
I am indebted for this condescension?
QUEEN. Not at this present time, but you shall know it.
My royal lord, a knight of some report,
Will also be at the approaching battle,
So take care you conduct yourself aright,
As I shall hear. Adieu! I wish you well!
TRY. Sir Lanfal, you've possession of my heart.
QUEEN. (*aside.*) I thought as much.
TRY. And if you do agree,
Call on me when you list and I will come.
LANFAL. But how?
TRY. My name is Tryamour—adieu!
LANFAL. Adieu! But oh, why do you leave so soon?
TRY. You have no time to lose. *Exeunt* FAYS.
LANFAL. Oh me! Oh ho!
What is there in a lady's smile, to give
So much effect? I'd rather have that look
Than all the gold between this place and Rome!
Now do I know th' electric power of love!
And thankful should I be to have its soft
And kindly ray shed round me, an' not the bolt,
Which is reported to have killed so many!
Was ever man so nearly lost as I?
Was ever man so thoroughly set up?
Here is the fairest lady of the world
Offers her sweet companionship and kindness;
And the fairest prospect opens unto honour
That ever showed unto a willing knight!
I know the bringer of the lovely garland,
And oh! she did it—Oh! why was it done?

Perchance in admiration for my father,
As if she were his daughter and my sister ;
Yet not so, but as sister loved me,
And therefore did it.

MERLIN. (*aside.*) Ay, sir, that is it !

LANFAL. Would God I could repay her but a half !
I will with worship if not tenderness.

MERLIN. And no one shall so willingly assist
Thee in thy worthy project, or rejoice
When it shall be attained more, than Merlin.

LANFAL. Who can they be? methinks that I have seen
That face before.

Enter HUGH.

HUGH. I bring you news, my lord !
King Arthur's ta'en the field with all his knights ;
And since we left, Sir Alan hath had notice
To join him with all speed at Pengern Castle,
Which he takes sadly, and would fain have you,
Excusing all the coldness of his conduct,
To be a leader in his fellowship.

LANFAL. And dost thou think that we should condescend?
Fortune, Hugh—good fortune smiles again ;
The world is not so darksome as I thought.
Thou gavest him back the horses and acknowledged
Exactly to th' extent our obligation ?

HUGH. I did, my lord.

LANFAL. Then that is finished ; we have done with him.
Now, come with me, and we will start afresh ;
I'll introduce thee unto better horses.

MERLIN. This way, Sir Knight.

LANFAL. Oh ! you are here, good Merlin !
I almost had forgot they'd spoke of you.

MERLIN. Such is th' electric potency of love !

LANFAL. I know not ; but—where are the horses, sir?
You see into the depth of everything. *Exeunt.*

SCENE V.—*The Forest.*

KING ARTHUR, *a* COURIER, *and* SOLDIERS *on the march.*

ARTHUR. This wedding gentlemen, 's a serious thing ;
It gives us half our motives. Some it makes

Faithless to friendship and most womanish ; some
Thoughtless of all things noble and full homely ;
Or coveteous for lucre, or ambitious ;
Some this, some that, I know not what of me.
I've been in many battles, an' hitherto
With little reck unto my personal safety ;
But now I feel there is a stake at issue !
This other half of whom the courier speaks,
Must be considered, nay, it must be served,
Whatever say the Fates, successfully ;
And I must fight and conquor, and return ;
I cannot leave out one of these conditions !
My charming Quenever this presses hard ;
I pray thee make me not too careful ; let
Not love and beauty take that use on them !
Thou dost not will it ; no, nor shall it be,
And yet we'll meet them, conquer, and return.

Enter KAY.

Good fortune is forbidden to say nay.
What sayst, Sir Kay— is all the country safe ?
KAY. There's nothing of the foe discoverable
On the path we have to travel. To the left
Are half a dozen smokes from local woodmen ;
And the neighbouring hamlet burnt to ashes some
Six days ago, hath had no visit since.
ARTHUR. The hamlet's close at hand, and Bedegraine
A dozen miles from there ?
KAY. They call it so.
ARTHUR. Convey the word unto the troops before,
And tell them, we will stop i' th' adjoining town
An hour or two, to recover our fatigue
Before we do proceed.
KAY. I will, my lord.
Have you heard of the arrival of Sir Lanfal ?
ARTHUR. We have, already—go ! *Exit* KAY.
Sir Courier
Attend us when we rest us at the town,
And we will try to reconcile our queen,
By the hopes and feelings that we bear to her.
All are suprised at the knight's appearence ;
Has he not accounted for his wealth,
And rich accoutrements in any way ?
ACCOLON. No, my lord, he's very tetchy on it,
And puts the question by disdainfully.

ARTHUR. Is this he who approaches?
ACCOLON. This is he.
ARTHUR. It shows an honest faithfulness at least;
He left us to enjoy our ease and trifling,
And joins us when our service is full hard.

Enter LANFAL.

How is't, my worthy knight, you come so timely?
LANFAL, My noble liege, I said I would not fail
To take my part whenever I could serve.
ARTHUR. Well I am glad to see you as a brother!
You're just in time—we're going to fight to-morrow;
Surprise them, if we can, and, if we can't,
Then have a cut at them, to relieve our friends,
And fall back on the woods, and our reserve.
Such is our plan, and your arrival, sir,
Gives us more hope; I greatly welcome you.
LANFAL. I thank my lord, King Arthur, for the greeting;
And I will share this enterprise with zeal,
For saving you, my lord, there's none I value
As Pellinore, and my friend, Sir Percival;
And rather than they should be pent a day,
And suffer from it, I would go against
A host of men. I've also been informed
Of the affront King Ryence of North Wales
Hath done unto your highness, and have vowed
Not to return again without acquital. *Exeunt.*

Enter MORGAN.

ACCOLON. I'll wait until the action be concluded,
And afterward if both of us be spared,
We'll have the quarrel out, and he may smirk,
And act the prince who wins.
MORGAN. A prince, forsooth!
ACCOLON. A prince, my fairy princess, whence are you?
This proves the quality you told me of.
MORGAN. You are too gall-less and forbearing sir;
To smile and joke contentedly, while foes
Walk past you in preferment! What are you?
Sir Lanfal is a proper looking prince;
But what are you? and why are you so low?
Your loyalty to Arthur, fear of Vryence,
And now your present tardiness of wrath,

By far outstrip your amiable passion,
Your often quoted all absorbing love
For me! Sir, if you value at a rush
Me or my favour, you will act more knightly;
I might as well have one of mine own grooms
To be my lover, as a knight inert.

ACCOLON. What means all this?

MORGAN. I stand among my foes;
Made such for you; and if your prize at all
What you have won, rest not with looking on,
But offer some assistance and protection!
Cast off your scruples! Let us wholly love,
And not in part, if we would love at all!

ACCOLON. Madam, if you could look into my breast,
You are mine only bond; mine only law.
No other aim have I unto my life,
No other purpose, but to do you service!

MORGAN. Then let us at the least have rid of Lanfal;
Nor you nor I can ever thrive at court
If he be there. Here is King Arthur's sword
And scabbard, which are in themselves enough.
I'll find the time and place. Are you content?

ACCOLON. I want no aids. Give me the time and place,
And as I've sworn, or he, or I shall die.
Madam, you know I have a right good will
For nothing less than this;—then why prelude
Suggestion that is welcome with discordance?
I love you more than all the world, and therefore
My love shall yield to nothing in the world;
Neither the place King Vryence holds, nor Arthur,
Nor any other power, nor position,
If you do give me leave and encouragement:
So much my love to you hath overgrown!

MORGAN. Not overgrown since mine doth equal it;
And every barterer claims equality.
No; let it climb and overspread the world,
And twisting round it, everywhere shall be
The emulating tendrils of mine own!
I was right piqued to find him as a Prince,
Whom I thought ragged and ruined. But—no matter!
Let us be reconciled; I have a plot
Whereby shall be retrieved our present lack
And our most dear affections franchised.
The time has not yet come. I'll let you know,
And give you all the means for the execution,

When it shall have arrived. You know my power;
I promise you revenge and elevation.
ACCOLON. Revenge I will have, and for elevation,
Enough for me is your companionship.
MORGAN. Farewell till fitter time!
ACCOLON. And when will be
Your next appearance?
MORGAN Sometime to-night, await. *Exit.*
ACCOLON. And so she vanishes! If I had not
Some knowledge of her tangibility,
I should pronounce her now a very fay.
She has the feats and features, but her passions
Belong to woman only. Ne'ertheless,
Strange as she is, she's more adorable,
And I am more her servant than my own;
Would that Sir Lanfal were beside me now! *Exit.*

ACT III.

SCENE I.—*A Tent.*

LANFAL *discovered.*

LANFAL. Methinks that the meridian of hope
Is beaming on me, and excites me to
A pitch of pleasure little short of frenzy!
Glorious light! why dost thou shine not ever?
Oh! why can we not ever challenge thee?
How fair and valuable thy welcome rays!
Thou hast more beauty than the sun of day—
Art more productive than its genial beam.
What is it that I fear or cannot do now?
But what could I before thy rising? Ah!
The wise, the strong, the great, when thou'rt withdrawn
Are no less helpless than the friendless blind.
She's borne me from the very depths of woe
To the pinnacle of joy! What shall I do?
I look around and reckon my resources,
But cannot find wherewith to render back.

Enter TRYAMOUR.

TRY. Awake, Sir Lanfal, you're betrayed—the foe
Will presently be in the camp among
You.
LANFAL. Madam, I am ready for them—or
I will be in a moment—where are they?
TRY. Get you armed, and I will take you there.
LANFAL. I haven't been expecting you to-night,
But value not the less the occasion,
Although it cost my life.
TRY. Oh, say not so;
But come away; you do not know your danger!

The wood you think so hiding and so harmless
Is full of foes and sharp uplifted blades,
And you'll be murdered to a man, asleep,
If you prepare not to receive them. Who
Has given the information and instruction,
And put them on this cowardly attempt
When they are twice your numbers is unknown;
It tells of a conspiracy too deep
And formidable to be overlooked;
And one that must be met with resolution.
Do you not hear, or do you not believe?
Is it an idle tale that I narrate?

LANFAL. Then is there not a minute to be spared?

TRY. Sir, are you ready? come, or you are lost—
A minute's worth a hundred men to you!
I'll see you when the fight is over.

LANFAL. Come! *Exeunt.*

SCENE II.—*Arthur's Tent. Night.*

A SENTINEL.

SENTINEL. I cannot understand myself to-night,
I shudder like a child, but it isn't fear;
I never cared for a battle in my life,
And yet I'm moody. What's the reason on't?
Everything is still and omenous
As th' eve of doom. But what's that to the point?
I've had my time of childhood—'tis not I
Shall willingly return to't. Curse the thing!
I'll make my body pay for it to-morrow,
Or rather, I will have it out of them,
For putting me in this predicament.
Listen, now, there's something in the wood!
There's something that's not right! I feel as if
There were unearthly beings all about me.
It isn't my fault only—what, beside. (*noise of arms.*
We're not surprised? By the mass, we are!
I knew that there was something wrong—we are!
To arms, to arms, my lords! The enemy
Is in the camp! To arms, to arms, my lords!

Enter Sir Kay, *and* Others

Kay. Oh! how is this! Has any gone against them?
Sentinel. I know not how it is.
Kay. I will away.
Keep at your post, sir, and defend the king. *Exit.*

Enter Arthur.

Sentinel. We are betrayed, my liege; the foe's upon us!
Arthur. Come, fasten on my armour, in a minute;
I would that I were there!
Sentinel. And so do I!
They came upon us without any warning.
Arthur. Be nimble with the fastenings, and careful!

Enter Baldwin *and* Others.

This is another piece of treachery!
But I conjecture I shall find them out;
And woe be to them!
Baldwin. Shall we wait, my lord;
Or shall we go?

Enter Hugh.

Arthur. Now, my helmet, quick!
Hugh. Sir, save yourself, for we have been betrayed,
And slaughter, like a flood, sweeps through the camp!
Arthur. And is there no one in defence of us?
Hugh. Yes, my lord; Sir Lanfal's heading them.
Arthur. Sir Lanfal, eh? Where does he make the stand?
Hugh. We are surrounded; pray you, save yourself!
Baldwin. Answer, fellow, as the king requires.
Hugh. Sir Lanfal was before us by the stream,
But may have changed his position now.
We are surrounded; and he bade me say,
That, if you would retire unto the south,
He'd draw to there.
Arthur. We'll draw there with him.
Before we flee for the first time in our life,
We'll know what's stirring. To the rescue, sirs! *Exeunt.*

Re-enter Forces, Arthur, Lanfal, *&c., driven out by* Ryence, Lot, *&c.*

Ryence. Now, my good fellows, onward heartily!

And the apostate prince, King Arthur, shall be slain,
And our father's race and our father's gods prevail.

LOT. Give them no quarter! for we owe a debt
Of vengeance to them, that their cuckold lives
And whole estates would not amount to more
Than a worthless composition. Lay it on! *Exeunt.*

IMP, *to whom re-enters a* KNIGHT *in black armour.*

IMP. Hallo! I thought 'twas you! Ha, ha, ha!
And this is your work, eh?

KNIGHT. Of course it is.
What, is our master here?

IMP. Why not? why not?
He can't neglect the gentleman's profession.
But how are you? Ye make some pranks up here!
Is't Mistress Morgan yet?

KNIGHT. Ay, ay—the same.

IMP. She carries well; I heard our master say
She's devilishly ingenious too.

KNIGHT. She is.
But don't think she has shown her colours yet;
This is preliminary; only just
Been telling Ryence where King Arthur was.
Thou'lt see a trick worth ten of this anon! *Exeunt.*

SCENE III.—*A Wood by faint moonlight.*

Enter ARTHUR *and* KNIGHTS, *led in by* MERLIN.

ARTHUR. I seem to see at times the shadowy forms
Of our murdered comrades flit across the path,
Beseeching us most frowningly for vengeance;
And while I've led you on so silently,
(And this I speak more confidently of,)
One like my faithful Merlin beckoned;
But that's gone too, and they are doubtless all
The airy pictures of a busy brain.
A sad plight has befallen us, Sir Knights
To wander aimless thus! I had but just
Exulted in my hopes when I was roused,
And like a common coward here and there,

Increasing the confusion and disgrace.
Sir Lanfal's done his duty ; he has gained

Enter RYENCE, BLACK KNIGHT, *and others.*

The better part of victory, self-respect:
He shall in future have his place among us.
RYENCE. Thou hast a quick eye, Knight, and I do thank
Thee! Who goes there?
ARTHUR. Who is it questions us?
RYENCE. I'll teach thee that thou runagate!
ARTHUR. You shall,
But tell me who you are? I am in quest of
One in particular—what is your name?
RYENCE. I am thy foe, King Ryence of North Wales,
Whom seekest thou?
ARTHUR. For thee well met my lord!
Stand by, Sir Knights, I'm compensated now
For all the losses that I have sustained,
By this same one encounter. Well, Sir King!
Thou hast not finished thy embroidery?
RYENCE. Come on! or thou wilt say, or others for thee
That I did take advantage in thy speech!
(*they fight*—RYENCE *and another slain, one captured, and the others driven out.*
ARTHUR. Thou'dst better used thine own beard for the mantle
Than sent for mine ; and did I say not so?
Three out of five is only pretty well;
But the darkness should be some apology,
Especially as they take unto their heels.
KAY. Either my sword refuses me its office
Or there's no mortal sufferable substance
Yonder for its bite!
ACCOLON. I found it so,
But tried another, and had more success,
And here he is beside me, flesh and bone.
ARTHUR. Flesh and blood, good fellow, after all!
I saw thee fighting well ; had he not run,
Thou wouldst thou have also brought the second down;
But one's a share ; be satisfied, Sir Kay,
For thou hast won thee worship for thy life!
KAY. I am mostly glad, my lord, to see th' effect
That you have brought on this barbarian.
ARTHUR. Ah! now do we redeem ourselves a little!
Let's bear the tidings to our scattered forces ;
The enemy's confused as well as we,

And we've begun to renovate our fortune,
While they've begun to fall. I said before
That we'd be with them by the break of day,
And ere it should be closed, relieve our friends:
That resolution we will still retain.
The first part of it they have made us keep,
Somewhat unceremoniously; the second
Let us now turn to, and I dare avouch,
By eventide, it shall not want fulfilment. *Exeunt.*

Enter MORGAN.

MORGAN. This undoes all; for what are men without
Leaders to head them? I will now essay
My final coup; and if I do succeed,
My fortune and revenge are both made up;
And if I fail I fail, and he's to blame
Who breaks his faith with me; and his the loss
If the reversal of all claim on such
A worthless thing as I may so be called.
But this I want not, though it might be held
By some to be the much more preferable.
Give me my way, and let me sink for ever
And suffer what you like! But to my part:
These battles are his feasts and harvest times,
And have attendance, he will not be far;
I know he is not far. To ask him, then,
Is what I have to do; to claim of him
A condition of the agreement he is bound to;
A wide and decisive engine to take off
Whom I may please:—a string of words is all
If I can only get them from my tongue!
Once he was fain to have the bond drawn out,
And cannot now reject an article;
Nor shall. I've waited too long to refuse
The occasion that is offered. Where's the mask? *Exit.*

SCENE IV.—*Another Part of the Forest.*

A GROUP *of* FUGITIVES.

1*st* F. This is the effect of being so very sharp—of trying to do things so finely! A proper encampment, in a regular way,

would at least have kept us on an equal footing; instead of that, we're now lost—pitched away! There isn't a ha'p'orth of chance for us! We can't tell where to go or what to do. I only wish I'd gone with my lady Morgan!

2nd F. They are coming—they are coming down on us!

Exeunt.

Enter PELLINORE *and others.*

PELLI. Well, let them go, we cannot hinder it;
So fearful and confused have they become,
We haven't met a score of them to-night
Remaining their own masters! They have cast
Both hope and weapon from bewilderment,
And are about as useful men at arms
As affrighted sheep!
Ah, comrades, ye are stout, but ye are few,—
A remnant, only,—else we would not seek
Assistance from the darkness of the night.

KNIGHT. There is a group of fugitives nigh hand,
Who, after mutual assurances,
Perchance may shortly venture to be seen.

PELLI. Would God we had the strength with which we left,
We'd make to-night expensive to King Ryence!

PERCIVAL. Our losses urge the more to the attempt.
Who wishes to survive companions,
Who've died in our defence, and by our side,
Whose death has been our life? To such, my lord,

Enter FUGITIVES, *gradually.*

We must acquit ourselves with death or vengeance.
Let us return unto the foe again,
And sell our lives as dearly as we may,
If't be the will of God we may not conquer.

PELLI. 'Tis nobly spoken, lad; nor do I know
(Although I have a double stake to lose
In having thee exposed by my side),
A better course that we may now pursue.
Soldiers, you see that we are not your foes;
We've cut a broad path through the enemy
To join and give support unto King Arthur;
And we have found no party to support.

1*st* F. Where is King Arthur?

PELLI. Where are you yourselves?
You know not that; how could you comprehend

If I should tell you where King Arthur is.
Shall we return alone? We could have kept
A hundred kings at bay within the fort;
But hearing of the treason they designed,
And your unguarded state, we did essay
To apprise you, or to strengthen you in conflict;
And in truth therein, full nearly are destroyed.
We ask you once for all to unite with us;
We are returning to our fallen friends;
And in faithfulness to their fidelity,
To keep them company or make our foes.

Enter KING ARTHUR *and others.*

Shall we return alone? We seek no more,
Nor talk, for one is useless as the other!

ARTHUR. How art thou, friend, my noble Pellinore?
Now do I know good fortune doth await!
How cam'st thou hither? Thou hast cut thy way
And call'st for vengeance for thy thinned band?
This shall thou have, I make my avow to God.
And for thy consolation at this present,
I' the neighboring glade I encountered with their king;
Have slain him, and have brought away his head.
Sir Kay hath done the same to a knight of his;
Sir Accolon hath overcome and captured
A royal friend of theirs, and there he stands—
A recreant confessed. The rest escaped.
(*Exultation among* SOLDIERS, C.
What use is shouting? gather silently,
And keep yourself unvented till you stand
Afront the enemy, then give it them,
Not through the tongue as foolish women do,
But by the heavy hand with might and main.
Away, Sir Knights, and muster all you can,
(The rendezvous behind this little copse)
And we will take them back their meritings!
Exeunt KNIGHTS.

LANFAL. We have too much to do for long embrace;
Pray God that he will give a time for it.

PERCIVAL. I hope that in his infinite grace he will,
For I have heard a deal of rumour, Lanfal,
And with thee or without, if I be spared
I'll sift it for the welfare of thy honour.

LANFAL. There is nothing called for now; farewell!

PERCIVAL. Farewell! *Exeunt* PERCIVAL *and* LANFAL.

ARTHUR. We have a grievous loss; but I do feel
Still more for you who suffered for our sakes;
And willingly. Sir, for this generous action,
The greatest favour that is in my gift
Is yours upon the asking! I would pay
The debt if I knew how, upon the moment;
And till I find the means I still must bear
The obligation, which is much more hard,
Unto my dying day.

PELLI. My noble liege,
You do me too much honour! How can I
Burden my royal lord with obligation?
My duty is your right—I did no more.
But if, sir, you would graciously bestow
Some favour on me, I would ask it now;
And pardon me if I seem covetous,
Or overreaching after your great leave.
Under your orders, I would ask of you
The further prosecution of this field,
That with our own hands we may give them back
The great severity that we have suffered.
We are warm already, sir; and shall begin
Not unprepared for the business.

ARTHUR. It
Is thine, my noble friend, and no small gift.
I thought to have taken it upon myself;
And no consideration, saving this,
Should have supplanted me; but thou shalt have it.
The death of Ryence hath allayed me somewhat:
And like the embodiment of the elements,
Do thou lead on my men, and show them how
To reap the harvest of a rightful vengeance. *Exeunt.*

SCENE V.—*The Field in early morning.*

PRINCE OLERON, TRYAMOUR, *and* FAY-KNIGHTS.

OLERON. Give me a band compact and resolute,
And you may steal the advantages you may,
Or infinitely add unto your numbers!
True courage rises as it may be called for,
And multiplies itself to equal terms.

So stand they now; the uncertainty is poised,
But the glory is already with King Arthur!
Observe their steady onset, and its firmness!
They mean not just to throw a stroke and run;
They mean to fight to the death; they are in earnest.
How is it, daughter, you forsake the couch
So early to survey the strife of arms?

TRY. Perchance, my lord, I may have come to observe
The pageant and the stratagems of war,
The better to apply your daily talk.

OLERON. 'Tis very well; remain beside thy father;
And I will tell thee of the various points
That are missed and taken, and direct thine eye
To the noblest deeds, and to the bravest knights.
More virtues are displayed by the soldier
Than he has credit for; true chivalry
Is the basis of true life. On it alone
Flourish the tenderer, fairer growths of truth.
Its hardiness and fortitude and courage
Are piety's defence and guarantee.
But this thou knowest; let us use our eyes.
Dost see the one afront of all the rest
Throwing on every side the rapid stroke,
And dealing death in heaps?

TRY. I do, my lord!

OLERON. What thinkst thou of him? does he not fight well?

TRY. I would he fought as safely.

OLERON. Have no fear!
He's a distinguished knight, and well experienced.
That daring seems more careless than it is,
And carries with it an impunity
Where calculation fails. Observe the charm;
They stand amid the anxious sphere of war
At about equal odds for life or death,
Yet, stay the stroke, and relax the care to gaze,
Both friend and foe! They come this way—retire!
Look to my daughter, sirs, for I would view them
More narrowly than a retinue allows.

TRY. Alas! I fear that his great deeds will draw
A storm of danger that he cannot cope with!

(*Fugitives cross stage. Exeunt* TRYAMOUR *and* FAYS.

OLERON. I thought, thou wouldst dissemble, but will fail;
No matter, he is worthy of thy love! *Exeunt.*

Enter conflicting forces, followed by the DEVIL; *forces driven out by* PELLINORE, *who then re-enters.*

PELLI. I must withhold myself, and breathe awhile;
And take a survey of the general battle.
We'll beat them yet, as fierce as they may be!
Go to those scattered troops unto the right,
And tell them if they cannot strike a blow,
To keep in solid masses. They're numerous,
But, by St. George, we'll send a part of them
Unto the Devils they delight to worship
Before the day be done! *Exit.*

DEVIL. Most likely! sir.
Take care you do not follow at their heels;
Some intimations that I have received
Presage more than the issue of the field.
A noble, and a gentlemanly pageant!
These puppet men accord me everything
Past all anticipation! Had we still
The favour of high Heaven, we could not frame
An occupation or amusement better!
Who does not like the conflict of fierce war?
The hurried breathing and the clash of arms;
Eye unto eye and body unto body;
In savage earnest? Who does not delight
To splash amid the reeking blood of carnage;
And lop a limb off here, a head off there
While through the serried mass you break your path?
Here come they, breathlessly contending still!
What need have such of cause, or meed, or prompting
More than the glory on it? Let us go!
Queen Morgan thinks her task more difficult
And dread, and I, perchance, may be of use there.

Re-enter conflicting forces.

1*st.* KNIGHT. Bear back, Sir Knight, on the peril of thy life!
2*nd.* KNIGHT. Not one inch farther, I! So help me God!
(2*nd* KNIGHT *felled.*
PERCIVAL. Hold thee! Sir Knight, and keep thyself unscathed!
(*the* KNIGHT *rescued.—Exit the* DEVIL, *laughing loudly.*

Re-enter PELLINORE.

PELLI. Still keep they here, and you can not enforce them!
(*fights with King* LOT, *who at length falls.*
Yield thee to me, or I will have thy head!

LOT. Have what thou can'st, no captive will I be.
PELLINORE *slays him.* *Exeunt forces.*

Re-enter OLERON.

OLERON. Alas! King Lot, thou yieldest to thy better!
Thine opposition was but right and honest,
And, not ambition; for King Arthur did
A deed unto thee not to be atoned,
Although unknowingly! Adieu, Sir King!
Thou diest in honour by Sir Pellinore.

Enter ARTHUR *and others.*

ARTHUR. Our losses are avenged to-day my lords,
And passing well! Sir Pellinore hath gained
Renown to fill the world, and gallant Lanfal,
And all of them but we! They merit it.
And yet the day's not ours; there remains
Sufficient for a breathing; forward, sirs,
And have at least a stroke or two among them;
They cannot grudge you that. I'll follow you. *Exeunt.*
OLERON. He has not seen King Lot, or would have paid
The briny tribute to his wronged friend.
Forbear thee, noble prince! thou can'st afford
To take up a companion in thy fame.
The great renown King Pellinore has gained
Thou gavest with thy generosity;
And the success and glory of thy knights
Thou shar'st with them. But though the day be won,
Nor thou, nor they, as my suspicious run,
Are yet secure to enjoy the event.
This we will look to. Sir, select a troop
Of our best agencies, and let them spread
Among the knights belonging to King Arthur,
To watch and keep them well upon the guard
Against all snares, delusions, and enchantments
That they may chance to meet with. Charge them well,
To let them not relax, but keep themselves
In readiness for further danger—danger
No less for its insidious character.
Exit FAY-KNIGHT.
Thou hast observed the achievements of Sir Lanfal?
TRY. I have, my father; he has well deserv'd
The confidence we gave him.
OLERON. So he has.

There's reason to suppose that special danger
Hangs over him. Now I confide to thee
The knight thou lovest; see thou guard him well,
And bring him with thee when the hour is past,
That I may recompense him with some honour.

TRY. I thank you, father, you have put me on,
And cannot blame me afterwards.

OLERON. Away! *Exeunt*

SCENE VI.—*After the battle.*

A group OF SOLDIERS—*enter* PELLINORE.

PELLI. How now, my comrades, what's your number now?
We've had a hard work of it for the while;
And dearly have they paid for what are lost,
Though not enough. Where are my gallant sons?
And where's Sir Lanfal and our other friends?

Enter SIR BALDWIN.

Sir Baldwin I am glad to meet with you;
After a field like this we may embrace,
As after many years of separation.

BALDWIN. All worship to King Pellinore! I greet you
With the hightest pleasure for your great success.
You found us in a very humble state,
But by your help we have recovered.
D'you see the king, Sir Accolon, and Lanfal
Keeping the contest up?

PELLI. I see them now;
And they have each a well addressed opponent,
Accoutred like, and fellow to each other!
I wonder how the rumour got abroad,
Connecting Lanfal with the treachery!
I never knew a knight, in all my life,
Conduct himself more nobly; never one!

BALDWIN. O, it's a baseless and envenomed slander!
He would not thus expose himself to hazard
If he were playing falsely.

PELLI. No, not he!

BALDWIN. They fly! they fly!

PELLI. Ah, that shall not avail!
Yet are they all three passingly well-horsed!
'Tis strange when all their countrymen have fled
That they should thus return. Let's follow after!
Exeunt.

SCENE VII.—*A Water's Bank with Thick Fog.*

Enter KNIGHTS *in black armour, laughing boisterously.*

FIRST. All right! all right! I see the signal out.
I cannot call to mind an equal spree!
SECOND. This is the best employment we have had;
Do they follow us as ardently as ever?
THIRD. Just at our tails they are! they marrow us;
Only look at the cantels of my shield,
And the strokes upon my helm!
(*throws it away, revealing a fiend's visage.*)
They've almost deafened me by mauling it,
Notwithstanding the cauterization we are used to!
To what a pitch they work themselves in sooth!
FIRST. I wouldn't object to be a man at all,
If I were but a king, and always fighting!
SECOND. 'Tis glorious!
SEVERAL. Ay, glorious is the word!

Enter IMP.

FIRST. Hollo! hollo!
IMP. All right?
FIRST. All right enough.
Yonder they come, like madmen, don't you see?
IMP. Ha, ha, ha, ha! was master in the field?
FIRST. Ay, ay! and was the merriest of us all.
THIRD. And when he saw us grinned full heartily.
IMP. I thought he would be there! Ha!—come along!
For ye've to change your suits, and take unto
The lisping words of the modestest of maids!

Enter ARTHUR, *&c., breathless, with haste.*

ARTHUR. Now, will I seek no further; I have done.
I wonder what King Pellinore will say,

After his great exploits, when he shall hear
That we have killed our horses, and half killed
Ourselves, for nothing! He will be amused.
Yet, have I such a hatred to the knaves,
Should they again be seen at any distance
I know not that I could restrain myself.

LANFAL. 'Tis strange!

ARTHUR. 'Tis passing strange, Sir Lanfal!
Didst thou not see them quite as well as I?
They were the same we've followed from the first?

Enter ACCOLON.

LANFAL. I watched them narrowly, and believe they were.

ACCOLON. How is it, my good lord? this is the sea!
Is't possible they've taken to the water?

ARTHUR. I cannot say; it baffles my embrace.
But let us rest while we consider us.
The day is done; the work should be so also.
They've vanished like a bubble in the air,
And left us but the moisture of this fog!

ACCOLON. I never had a business equal this!
What think ye if we hail yon little craft;
There's not a shelter on this desert shore.

ARTHUR. I felled each individual of the three
A dozen times unto the grass of the earth;
Yet have they risen like a spring, as did
Antæus of old times with pristine vigour;
And never a trickling of their blood was there!

LANFAL. So I can almost say. I beat his mail
To very bits, and through the rents I saw
His hideous visage; yet he went unharmed!

ACCOLON. Which I am not. I got a little wound
From a blow that glanced from another's helm.

LANFAL. Thank God, I yet can show a perfect skin;
Although my armour scarcely keeps upon me.

ARTHUR. And I almost, but not entirely so.
But how shall we devise us for the night?
For we are at the least ten miles away
From all our forces, and the roofing canvas;
And Heaven only knows in what direction!
Hail yonder vessel for us, Accolon.

ACCOLON. Ahoy, aboard there! ahoy!
(*distant answer* "Ay, ay, sir.")
Sir, we would have some converse with the captain;
And if you would but send the boat ashore,

Or come alongside here, we would explain,
And pay you for the inconvenience.

ARTHUR. They have a neat and goodly-looking craft,
And one that would be well beseen by day!
How handily he's put her head about,
And bent her course unto us! I have had
A horse that would anticipate my will
I' the pace I wanted, and direction;
That would spring forward to the point required
By the varying battle to my instant wish;
But scarcely one more plaint than this vessel!
How gracefully it glides among the waves,
And yields its movement to reduced sail!

TRY. The colour of its furnishings is fair,
And bright, but that's not it; it hides within
A foul and deadly engine to destroy you.

ARTHUR. I almost think we'd better have returned,
Or taken the damp rock to be our host;
But now, since they are come we must abide it.
(the vessel comes alongside.
We've called you, captain, to desire of you
To let us share your cabin for the night;
And since your kindness is so ready, we
Have half anticipated your compliance.

CAPTAIN. Sir, I have not absolute command,
The lady owner being aboard with us;
But doubt not that you will be made right welcome.

LANFAL. My lord, I do misdoubt these incidents.
What if this barge belonged unto the knights
That we have chased? and unto me it seems
Most likely. Sir, I rede we do not go.
On shore we can defend ourselves, but there
Resistance would be wholly out of reach.

ARTHUR. I have my scruples, but I hold a rule
Not to refuse what may be kindly offered
Although I want it not, and not to swerve
From any thing for risk. We'll try it, sir,
Or let us overhaul them at the least.

LANFAL. 'Tis well my lord, I care not for myself.

ACCOLON. Nor I, provided
I do not lose the sight of my revenge.

TRY. Fear not, Sir Knights, for you are safe as long
As you are true; the only danger lies
Within yourselves—self-treachery, self-weakness.
Remember the Almighty is supreme,
And no one can be taken from his reach;

That he's endowed you with sufficient strength,
And calls on you to use it, and to conquer.
One truth there is, and there is only one—
Make it your only aim, your single council,
And it will keep you 'gainst an armed world.

ARTHUR, *&c., on board, met by a* LADY *and* ATTENDANTS.

ARTHUR. Fair lady, we are poor petitioners,
Much wearied from a battle we have fought,
And from a long chase of our enemies
Who have escaped somewhere in these woods,
We are in want of shelter for the night;
If you can find us that convenience,
We will be honest guests, and pay you well.
LADY. Most royal sir, I ask a hundred pardons,
For having kept you waiting for so long.
I saw you on the shore, but did not deem
It were the greatest prince in Christendom.
Forgive, sir, the result of ignorance,
And pray command the best of cheer we have.
ARTHUR. We thank you, fairest lady, very largely,
And are full glad that we are known to you;
And if you have no fare but friendliness
And your good company, 'twere better cheer
Than many a formal festal board ashore.
LADY. We hope, Sir King, to keep the seaman's fame
Untarnished for its generosity.
We were preparing supper when you hailed,
And flatter us that after fighting hard,
With choice, you may find something to your taste,
And you may after, take the rest you need. *Exeunt.*
TRY. The truth, the truth—be faithful to the truth!

Enter a CREW *of ugly bronzed creatures, who prepare to sail.*

Now are they for a moment given up!
I pray the Lord that he will not withhold
His help too long. Thou knowst the frailty of
The sons of men, O give them now defence!
The army of the heathen thou hast scattered,
Deliver now from the craft of the magician;
And by their own devices let the wicked
Confused be, and punished, and destroy'd.
I ask it in the name of him who died
To reclaim and purchase mercy for mankind.

FIRST. The palace, the dungeon, the bed—these are the places to halt at.
Sir Accolon goes as a pall; the others we must try an assault at.
I warrant that Laxity Castle shall have its impression on one;
And what it may fail, by a knight and a sword shall be afterwards done.
But the best of the plan is untold. Sir Lanfal must go to the bed
Of Quenever, wife of King Arthur! Is the plot not ingeniously laid?
Though Arthur survive and return, he will learn he's a strumpet for wife,
Our mistress escape from suspicion, and gain by the consequent strife.
SECOND. Is it not capital, fellows? my good damned fellows, well meant!
THIRD. Capital! let us be off that we may enjoy the event.
ALL. Heigh ov'r morass and moor, hoist high every stitch of a sail,
Until we the palace, and dungeon, and bed of Queen Quenever hail.
Three cheers ring out for success—three, three for our Queen let us gi'e!
And three times three as it ever shall be for victim and for votary. *Exeunt*

ACT IV.

SCENE I.—*Castle Gate at Camelot. Horns heard.*

Enter MORGAN, LANFAL, QUENEVER, *&c.*, *from castle, who meet* VRYENCE, *&c.*, *from war.*

MORGAN. Ah! good my lord, how glad we are of you!
What news? for we are stunned with wonders, here!
VRYENCE. We must apply to your companion!
MORGAN. I am afraid that you'll apply in vain.
BALDWIN. How is it you are here? We are surprised!
Were not you one who did accompany
The king, when he pursued the sable knights?
LANFAL. I was, and now accompany his queen.
BALDWIN. How came you here, and where are they—the King
And Accolon, your comrade? We have not
Heard e'en a single word about them since!
QUENEVER. What are the tidings that you bring, my lords?
Have you no better news than good Sir Lanfal?
VRYENCE. Madam, we know not his, but we have none,
More than the first sad knowledge of our loss.
The country has been searched on every side,
And their dead horses found, but not a trace
Has been obtained of their whereabout;
Sir Lanfal promises to know the most.
LANFAL. The little that I know of it is useless,
And merely plays with our anxiety.
QUENEVER. It gives no light at all upon the subject;
He merely found himself transported from
The company of the King to Camelot;
From some mysterious barge in which they were
Unto his bedroom here at Camelot.
But why or how is out of the power of him,
Or any other man to comprehend—

Excepting that it must be some enchantment.
And now I fear the more for Arthur's fate
Since he hath not the assistance of Sir Lanfal.

MORGAN. May God defend him from the treachery!

LANFAL. You all perceived us when we left the field;
Our royal lord declared that he would have them
If they should lead him to the realm of Scotland;
We pushed the spurs into our horses' sides,
And followed hard—at first a crowd of us—
At length the King, Sir Accolon, and I
Were all who had not given up pursuit,
We gained considerably upon them, but
Our horses failed, and could not take us further;
Still we pursued eagerly on foot,
For we perceived the recreant knights unhorsed,
And followed thus until the even fall.
The last time that we saw them they were scarcely
Ten yards before us, by a little wood,
Yet gave us there the slip—so much for them.
We searched the copse and reached the other side
In disappointment and full wearily;
And there found an extensive sheet of water,
And passing by a rich and graceful barge;
We hailed her, and were freely welcomed by
A party of extremely handsome ladies,
And after supper lodged full easily;
Next morning I was here. That's all I know.

BALDWIN. And do you nothing know of the transition?

LANFAL. Nothing!

SEVERAL. How marvellous!

MORGAN. Depend upon it
Those ladies were enchantresses and false.

MERLIN. Show no concern of that, my lady Morgan.

MORGAN. Do I become too personal, my good sage?

QUENEVER. Alas! what has become of my good lord!

MERLIN. Be comforted, fair madam, and good knights;
The King depends upon his own exertions—
Depends upon his virtue and good will
No less, no more than you yourselves at home;
Cease then your care about another's duty,
And do that which awaits upon yourselves.
You, madam, give a welcome to the knights
Who come in all their worship from their labour;
Let them taste the flavour of appreciation,
And be encouraged in the path of honour;
And you, Sir Knights, that by your late exploits

Have proved yourselves so worthy, do not think
That it is useless to pursue in peace
What you so daring are to snatch from war.
A proper man can gain as much of honor,
I' the cause of fellow-subjects as of kings,
I' the cause of th' humble against the arrogant,
Of the wronged against the rogue as can be gained
In the imposing ranks of serried hosts.
In all conditions duty is the same,
And varies not in nature or in merit.
Then, slack you not in the pursuit of glory,
But seek you, and accrue the fairer fame—
The natural laurels that belong to peace.

MORGAN. Well spoken, sir, but not much to the point;
We talked of the King and of his loss.

MERLIN. I tell you that the King, within himself,
Bears his own safety and deliverance;
That there is nothing for you but to wait,
On his account; but as for those of you
Who may perchance be similarly tried,
Look you within, and emulate the honor,
That may be gained in union with the King.

BALDWIN. I know not whence you get your comfort, sir,
If we may style it not indifference.

QUENEVER. And yet I think that we may take the advice,
For we may do no good by standing here,
And know not how to render any aid.
Come in, Sir Lanfal and fair knights, you all,
For you have earned the best of entertainment,
Whatever be the fate of my lord, King Arthur;
And are as welcome for your deeds of valour
As doubtlessly as we do grieve for him. *Exeunt.*

SCENE II.—*Arthur's Ordeal—a Dungeon.*

ARTHUR *and* MORGAN.

ARTHUR. "There is one truth, and there is only one,"
I need not be perplexed then. Let me starve,
Let all the pangs of thirst and hunger seize
On my intestines, and let death ensue,
Whence vital heat should rise, I will be firm,
And neither to the right hand, nor the left,

Diverge one step, but act or trust in truth.
My faith and right shall be my only guide,
Let come what may! Pray, Heaven, my resolve
Be not too late!

(MORGAN, *by a wave of her wand, deprives him of consciousness.*

MORGAN. That's worthy of suspect!
Though in the sword alone remains much hope.
(*the scene disappears and is replaced by*

A HALL OF STATE,

In which ARTHUR *appears as a great King somewhat elated, but another royal personage is there, a* QUEEN, *to whom quite as much respect is paid.* LADIES *dance fascinatingly, offer him wine, which he tastes, and crowd round him, praying his love, he pities their weakness, and waves them off.*

ARTHUR. Fair ladies! you may save yourselves much trouble;
I'm no way in the humour, nay, averse,
And have in hand an adverse business.
Sir Knights, I have perused your request,
And do approve it, and commend your part;
I would that all the chambers of my court
Were filled to overcrowding with such men;
Men who live more i' the principles of knighthood
Than in the thought of dress and appetite.
I'm proud of you, and all that in me lay
Will render you assistance.

LADY. Not so fast;
Consider, sir, I gave thee all thou hast,
And can rescind; keep thy obedience,
And keep thy state; do else, and forfeit all.

ARTHUR. Madam, I know you; by most part are you
Yclept the Queen of Life; not without show,
From your great power and bounty, of some reason;
But wherein have you any right of title?
Are you divine? Then show it in your acts;
Your ways and wishes are as fallible
As mine. Madam, I beg to be myself.
Sir Herald, hie thee to the savage Torquine,
And bid him to release the youthful knight;
And search thou every chamber of his dungeons,
And bring to me the voices of complaint.
Advise him to beware the second time,

When I shall be compelled to interfere. *Exit* HERALD.
And take thou this unto Sir Ballangere,
And bid him to submit himself, and yield
The castle that he holds unlawfully,
Within six days, on peril of his head. *Exit* HERALD.

(*The* KING *turning to the* DRINKERS, GAMBLERS, *&c.*, LADIES *and* KNIGHTS, *who have taken to the different phases of frivolity and unprincipledness.*

So strong, so old, and yet withal so foolish!
Is there no business to employ their hands,
No labour of utility or honour?
I know them not; whose menie are they of?
What do they here within my royal court?

LADY. 'Twere well you had your questions answered, sir;
These ladies, whom you treat with so much coldness,
On whom you turn your back, are daughters of
Renowned kings and dukes; these noble knights,
Whom you do look upon contemptuously,
Themselves are kings and dukes, and your own equals.

ARTHUR. Be what they may, they have no right on me,
Nor on my court. I am responsible,
And I will rule, and will have none of them.
(ARTHUR *expels them; they depart vindictively.*
A sounding name is nothing without knighthood,
Their degradation, no less odious
Than that of others, let them fare alike.
I leave to women, who have not the power
To resist effrontery, to act at shifts;
And I will do my duty while I may.

LADY, *by her wand, again strikes* ARTHUR *senseless, and the scene disappears, and is replaced by*

A WILD SPOT,

Where many dead bodies show the track of a routed army.

Enter ARTHUR *and others in retreat.*

ARTHUR. The die is cast and we have lost; what now?
Swiftly they come, and near at hand are they,
Who seek our blood; then leave me! Fly, my lords,
And save yourselves till better times arrive!
I will no further, but present myself
To fortune's favourites, and take the fate

That they may be inspired to deal to me.
I am the prize was played for; they have won—
Unfortunately for us—but fairly won;
And I will yield myself thereby to stay
The shedding of more blood. So now for life,
If life ye value! There will come a time,
Though I may be no more, when ye shall take
Your rightful places; bend unto the storm
Till fair days come. Nay, sirs, are you so true?
For my sake, fly! Well, well, it is almost
Too late. Give me your hands, if ye are firm;
Now, as in better times! Pray Heaven they
Have grace to treat us with some decency!
Where go ye, sirs? They are too strong for you;
You go to certain death!

COURTIER. Not quite so sure
As you imagine, sir.

Enter a QUEEN *and* FORCES, *with whom* COURTIERS *fraternize.*

ARTHUR. Why, no, not quite,
Not quite! And that's your game, fair sirs? See that!
See that, thou Great Accountant, who takes note,
And balances the payments and receipts
Of mortal men! Omit not that, Sir Justice!

KNIGHT. Is there no avocation for my liege?
No business of utility or honour?

SECOND. The king who has more enemies than subjects,
May doff his crown. Permit me, good my lord.
(takes away his crown.

THIRD. Now is the time for your philosophy,
To prove the part much greater than the whole
And the whole less than a portion; can you that?

SECOND. Now may you turn the fat of your eyes on high
And cry, alas, how foolish people are!

ARTHUR. This is a lesson I expected not.
'Twill teach my heart to stay much more at home.

LADY. (*with the crown.*) But if thou wouldst give way, I hold it still?

ARTHUR. And hold it on, and ever, if thou will'st!
Let what is false give way, and what is true
Remain to counteract to its extent.
Why should I rue for that I can not blame,
And why recant what I can not amend?
I ask for nothing; take the thing, and go;
And if it be that men have paid their homage

Unto the cap I wore, and not to me,
Then let them follow that which they conceited!
Exeunt ALL *in scorn and levity.*
I want nor slaves nor patronizing friends;
I want but comrades in the cause of right,
And they shall not be baited, or be bought;
And if they come not, I will be alone.

As before, by the LADY'S *doing, the stage is again darkened and another scene appears.*

A STREET OF AN ANCIENT TOWN,

Along which are seen many PASSENGERS *full of business and other more fanciful ideas and purposes.*

Enter ARTHUR *in a state of great poverty.*

ARTHUR. There is a peace in nature, O how deep!
I'd rather have that peace than to possess
The broad lands that it dwells on. Blue ey'd earth!
If it be not against thy royal will,
Impart to one adversity has stripped
Of all things else, a portion of thy peace—
A little, lest I never ask thee more!
Brought up to all the train of wealth and power,
Which time made second nature, I am now
Wrenched of all, and friendless as a stranger;
For what deserving, Heaven only knows!
I fancied that each mortal had possess'd
A light within to guide his erring steps
Through this dark world, which in the end would lead
To what was best; I followed what I deemed
The inward light, and thus am served! Alas!
The fate of him who strives to do too well!
If ye would live i' the world, get supple knees,
And smiling faces, such as shopmen wear,
And join with all things that have been established;
Or make your minds up to a constant conflict,
And learn at every stroke you do no good.
Correct your head from turning on aside
When you shall happen to discriminate,
The lie, the truth, the wisdom, or the folly;
For such impolicy will surely end
In enmity and isolation.

But yet, methinks, nature is genial still!
The spirit that doth dwell within it knows
That I have done no other than my duty.
LADY. A poor untangible reward is that,
That oft times can't be recognised at all.
ARTHUR. Let them jest on, laugh, skip and sing; 'i the end
They'll have no more in pocket. Death will come
And strip them of their gold, their wit, their clothes,
And bring them to the universal level.
I have but made a step to it betimes,
The easier to achieve the final fall.
Farewell soft wind, fair sunlight and blue hills,
I cannot take you to the place I go.
Farewell to you, and all my consolation!
Exit down a passage.—The scene is removed and shows

THE DISMAL HOME OF POVERTY.

King ARTHUR *in a still more wretched mood; the* LADY *observing him.*

ARTHUR. Amid the filth, the excrements of nature,
With the spare pittance of the grinding world,
I am embound. My poor and aching heart
And soul play truant to the situation,
And wander—ah, that they could there abide,
And let my body be abandoned—
To the azure heaven, the loveliness of truth,
The freedom and the state of other times.
But all they get's more discontent return;
For I am pent, irrevocably pent,
With filth and drudgery, and every baseness,
Without a comrade or consorting thing;
Without, alas! my own heart to support me!
Can life be borne? or should it be endured
In filth and pain, and scorn and mockery,
Without a single qualifying point—
Without a ray of sun or breath of air?
LADY. I should think not; behold and choose relief,
Relax thy stiffness and regain thine own,
Or cease thy life and grumbling like a man.
Showing the crown and a dagger.
ARTHUR. Thou comest again, thou vicious tamperer!
I hate and scorn the debasement of my lot,
But scorn and hate thee more and all thy gifts;

And as a period to my wretched life,
I'll rend the lying windpipe from thy throat,
And then accept thy proffer—not before.

ARTHUR *wrestles with and overthrows the* TEMPTER *who is discovered for a glimpse as* MORGAN, *at which the scene disappears and shows* ARTHUR *at liberty in*

THE GLORIOUS LIGHT OF A SUMMER'S DAY.

ARTHUR *sinks on the ground. Enter* FAYS, MERLIN, *&c. with joy and thanksgiving at finding him.* FAYS *sing.*

Thus all forces can be brought
'Gainst a good-will come to nought,
If you act your honest part
When you can, and never start
When the sky seems overcast,
But have faith unto the last

All your losses and your woes,
And misfortunes are but shows,
Made to try you. All things real
Contribute to joy and weal.
Who, then, would not faithful be
To himself and victory?

Behold, Sir King, the day is glad of thee!

ARTHUR. Where am I? this is strange, and monstrous treatment!
'Twas not my sister? Sirs, have you observed—
Can you explain to me this strange occurrence?

PERCIVAL. My lord, we have been hither led by Merlin,
And are surprised as much as we are glad
To meet with you. That's all that I can say.

ARTHUR. Did you not see her whom I wrestled with?

PERCIVAL. No, good my lord, you only have we seen,
But that's enough to make a country grateful!
How do ye, Sir? and where have you been kept
From your enraged loyal knights, so long?
On whom and what shall we wreak our revenge?
Is it upon this castle? I perceive
A knight upon the walls observing us?

ARTHUR. This castle is the traitress, or some one
Within the castle, but I know not how.
Did you not see them leave me?

PERCIVAL. No, my liege.
ACCOLON (*on walls.*) What want ye, sirs, before these castle walls?
Announce your name and wishes.
ARTHUR. Half of that.
Find you a champion to support your right,
In single combat, on the open field,
Accordingly to the impartial laws of knighthood,
Or I will raze your castle to the ground.
ACCOLON. I wait on you what time you please, Sir Knight.
ARTHUR. Then meet me, sir, two hours hence, and here.
ACCOLON. I will not fail.
ARTHUR. I would not have deferred
One moment, comrades, if I had not been
Full hardly treated with.
MERLIN. 'Tis well, my lord,
That you've effected your escape so knightly;
The open air will brace your nerves again.
Behold the grave of the Northumbrian brothers!
Balan, the younger, was encharmed here,
E'en like your highness, but he yielded not,
Defied their power, and every champion
They sent against him, slew; and six long months
Endured the scorn and laughter from yon turrets.
Then came Sir Balin, and the treacherous damsel,
Who bade him on the word he gave to you,
Fight his own brother (whom she knew full well);
They fought and slew each other, and were laid
Together in this honourable grave.
ARTHUR. You overwhelm us, Merlin! I shall lose
The fight in consequence. Alas, this world! *Exeunt.*

SCENE III.—*Neighbourhood of Camelot.*

Enter LANFAL.

LANFAL. Ah, me! she comes; Oh, ho, that I were worthy!
I feel myself beloaded with good fortune!

Enter TRYAMOUR.

TRY. Well, Lanfal, you are safe despite of them!
They cannot sever our united love.

LANFAL. Oh, never! there's no room for any peril
While I can bring my thought to bear on you,
And human life be capable to bide them.
TRY. And that shall ever be; they have no power.
Against the fortress of a virtuous will.
But where, I pray you, have you been this while?
Perhaps I'm building too much on my hope,
And you have been unfaithful unto me?
LANFAL. Is't not a marvellous affair? I have
A moment only, but I could not help
Seizing the pleasure and excuse to tell;
But peradventure you know more than I?
TRY. Oh, no, no, no; tell what your feelings were;
Of your incipient faithlessness, and so on.
LANFAL. My feelings? I have felt my love for you,
And my unworthiness, but that I would
(The only mode I can return your kindness)
Reach to the limit of our human valour
To do some honour unto your fair name.
That's all I've felt, and all I ever shall.
As for the trick that I have undergone,
'Twas very kind of them; they saved my legs
A two days' march, and called to my aid
Your tender sympathies, for which I thank them.
TRY. You have not told me all; give me the whole,
For men do often hide beneath their mirth
Those things they are most anxious to conceal.
I pray you, Lanfal, keep you nothing back,
For faithful love would tell me everything.
LANFAL. Then you shall have it all, to prove me faithful.
After the battle and a long pursuit,
In which we wrought a dreadful havoc on them,
There reappeared three knights upon the field,
And called my lord King Arthur, and King Vryence,
And stout Sir Accolon to single combat.
We gathered toward them to view the contest;
After a little while, the skipping knights,
Forsook the field and fled, we after them.
Well horsed, they kept ahead, and only three,
King Arthur, and Sir Accolon, and I
Continued the pursuit. However, three
Were quite enough to follow shadows! They,
After alluring us for many a long
Mile, disappeared at the edge of dark,
And left us rather foolish and fatigued
To the foggy night, beside a water bank;

We took a barge that there was passing, and
Were freely entertained, by apparent ladies,
On board of it; had separate beds, and in
The morning I awoke at Camelot,
In Arthur's place beside Quenever;
And now you have the whole. Can I not speak
Eloquently!

TRY. I hope I have the whole.
Methinks you have not cleared the case too much
By this recital; is there nothing more?

LANFAL. Believe me, nothing; ever since I woke,
My only thought has been my fairy love.

TRY. You say so, Lanfal, but I know the worth
O' the words of men, an' how lightly they are used.

LANFAL. I do protest that which I say is true.
Why should it not be? I do love you more
Than twenty Quenevers could be the cause of.
'Twas she who exiled me from Camelot,
Who stript me of my place and livelihood,
Who scoffed at me, and led the rest to do so,
Because I dared for the common weal of virtue
To tax her for her follies. Do not think
I shall be silent and suppress my words
Because her fancy may be turned on me.
The one that dared to risk his rank in life
In the service of a generality,
Shall not betray to please Queen Quenever,
(Beside his faith unto a royal lord,
And troth unto a still more royal lady),
The peace of this life and the hope of heaven.
Come smile fair Tryamour, I know you love,
And you believe that I portray the truth;
Nay, you do know it all as well as I;
Then do not pout as would a common wench,
But give me now the genuine article,
And tell me how my comrades in adventure,
King Arthur and Sir Accolon have sped.

TRY. Well now, I will, Sir Lanfal. As you say,
I know your words as true, and you are faithful,
For I was in the chamber of the queen,
When Morgan stole to smile upon success,
And saw how very quietly you lay.

LANFAL. Queen Morgan! was it her contrivance then?

TRY. Queen Morgan is the author of it all,
And Accolon her blind associate.

LANFAL. Gramercy Heaven! who shall know his neighbour?

And they betray'd us to the enemy?
I marvel less to hear it of the queen,
But never should have thought of Accolon.
And so you saw us in the bed together?

TRY. Remember you've no ordinary lady
To deal with; and for the extra love of mine,
I claim unquestionable faithfulness.

LANFAL. That shall be surer, lady, than my life.

TRY. I do not doubt you, or at least I love
Too strongly to consider of a doubt;
And you have proved your worthiness so well,
Nay, we might almost say so easily,
That I will not be jealous, but confiding.

LANFAL. But where's my lord, King Arthur?

TRY. 'Tis unknown.
But he depends upon himself, as you did,
And if he be as faithful unto virtue,
He'll be as safe.

LANFAL. Then if there be the means,
In skill and wisdom, he will compass it.

TRY. He is a noble knight, and well becomes
The high position that he occupies;
He hates the baseness of a coward, and
Omits not any point in chivalry;
But he is not more noble than—another.
He knows the worth of virtue, and contemns
The feebleness of vice, but he does not
Take that delight i' the one, nor yet that care
To avoid the other, as a knight I know.
He is devoted to our holy faith,
And a hundred times against the savage pagan
And haughty infidel, has risked his life;
And he looks unto our Saviour for his hope;
But does not show th' example of Sir Lanfal.

LANFAL. I thank you, but I know not where you see,
The estimation that you say of me,
Nor yet a text to introduce the subject.

TRY. You see that I admire you too much,
And against the standard of the countier.
But let us touch no more with selfish words,
His character who undergoes a test
Decisive and severe, but rather pray
That he may be sufficient to withstand it.
King Oleron observed you on the field,
And bade me to invite you to his presence,
To take a token of his admiration.

LANFAL. I am extremely honoured by the wishes
Of my lord the King, and will obey him wholly;
But, pray you, give me council what to say,
I am engaged to meet Queen Quenever,
This very hour.
TRY. O, I will give you leave:
We cannot break our faith with fellow-sleepers!
LANFAL. Pray tell my gracious lord, King Oleron
Of the circumstance—of which I am most loath—
That keeps me from the acceptance of his favour.
TRY. All shall be well; another time shall serve.
I did forethink me much of the late passage;
'Tis mainly over now, and I am glad.
You know the past, beware the future, Lanfal!
LANFAL. No danger of unfaithfulness to you.
TRY. I'll not detain you, and I hope you'll be
No less as steadfast as I'll be to you.
Adieu!
LANFAL. Adieu! through false and true, I will.
Whatever were the test, all, all must fail,
Against a treasure so incomparable. *Exeunt.*

SCENE IV.—*Beneath the Walls of a Castle.*

QUEEN MORGAN *and* DWARF *discovered on the walls.*

MORGAN. At length I see they take unto the lists;
I thought the lazy hours had refused
To bring about th' attainment of my purpose.
Hie with this weapon unto yonder king,
And tell him that thy mistress, Morgan, sends it,
From her great love; but let him not know whence.
Mention a mighty toil that it has cost
To get it to his hand, and urge its use,
Because of greater danger than he knows of.
Thou understandest?
DWARF. Ay, great mistress mine;
And fear not, I will carry out your wishes.

Enter ARTHUR *and* OTHERS *on one side, and* ACCOLON *and* OTHERS *on the other.*

MORGAN. Now is the crisis drawing on apace,

That either lifts me to the royal seat,
Or drives me forth an underplotting traitress.
If yonder dwarf does well, so shall we speed;
But be it as it may, we have not done.

Enter DWARF.

DWARF. Queen Morgan sends you this from her great love.
Her loyal and affectionate concern
Stretches afar; but labour infinite
Alone's enabled her to yield this service.
ARTHUR. Gramercy! she is not unfaithful then?
Here is my royal sword, Excalibur!
It could not have been sent at greater need.
PERCIVAL. It is the sword.
ARTHUR. The very same, I know;
But how she has contrived to learn of us
Puzzles me more.
DWARF. With many words, my lord,
She bade me urge you to make use of it,
As there is still more danger to be met
Than eye can see.
MERLIN. I scarcely can conceive't;
And yet it is exactly similar.
ACCOLON. Let him who woke the echoes of the morn,
With threatening challenge own unto it now.
ARTHUR. I'll take the sword. The torture and the fast
They laid on me shall be apology.
'Twas I; and will confirm it with my hands.
If thou art of this castle, I proclaim thee
The falsest knight that ever bore a shield,
And the worthiest of debasement, and shall have it.
ACCOLON. Keep thou thy words, and I will prove to thee
Thou art as false, exclusive of this lie.
(*they fight*—MERLIN *soon finds out the true state of things, puts on his cloak of darkness, informs* KING ARTHUR, *and bustles about in a great fidget during the remainder of the fight. In the meantime, both* COMBATANTS *having received many strokes,* ARTHUR *grows weak, and* ACCOLON *hardy.*
MORGAN. He seems as at an idle game at foils,
And with the means I have provided him
Will lose the day from sheer indifference!
Puts on a cloak of darkness and exit from walls.
ACCOLON. Now, mine opponent, keep thyself from harm,
It's no time for me to allow thee rest.

Re-enter MORGAN *in the same state of invisibility as* MERLIN, *and in the same fidget; she rushes to* ACCOLON, *who gets a glimpse of her while speaking.*

MORGAN. Oh, why dost thou protract the combat thus?
By all thou holdest sacred, oath or life,
Fight earnestly, and get it done. Strike home!
The Lady Morgan, whom thou lovest, urges.
ACCOLON *rushes on* ARTHUR, *who becomes wroth, and smites mightily in return, and therewith his sword breaks.*
ARTHUR. Alas! it is so; there is nought but treason!
ACCOLON. Now, keep thee from me—thou art but as dead.
(ACCOLON *presses* ARTHUR, *who thrusts his shield against him and strikes him with the pommel of his sword, that he goes some strides back, and forcibly gets possession of Excalibur.*
ARTHUR. Thou hast been from me all too long, my friend,
And hardly hast thou dealt unto thy master.
(ACCOLON *attacks* ARTHUR *fiercely for which he receives many hard blows, which fell him to the earth; the scabbard is pulled from his side and flung to a distance.*
MORGAN. The day is lost! alas, the day is lost;
Could you not keep the arms upon you? Ass
That you are! you stupid slubbering fool!
Did I not tell you, when the victory offered?
You might have tak'n it for another's sake,
Albeit you were too clever for yourself!
But you must drawl away and yield the sword!
It were a pleasure an' you were alone!
MERLIN. Now is the fort assailable to all!
You who have friends of blood or of affection
Immured within, away to their relief!
Let it be stript unto the very stones;
Then blown i' the air, that henceforth not a hole
Or shelter may remain for tenant there.
PERCIVAL. Come on, ye, all to the rescue of Sir Lanfal!
Exeunt PERCIVAL *and countrymen.*
MORGAN. Curse on your Lanfal! I had rather take
The worst fate that is possible, to have
The satisfaction of my hate upon ye.
Now am I unveiled unto the world,
And through the fool that I have favoured so! *Exit.*
ARTHUR. What have I done, that thou shouldst press me thus?
Speak, sir, for thou hast little time to live.
ACCOLON. There's less requirement, then, for any speaking.

I'll never yield a word in cowardice,
Let God do with my body what he will.

ARTHUR. Inform me how thou hadst this sword of mine?

ACCOLON. Woe worth the sword, for by it I am slain!
I pray you, bear it to my lord, King Arthur,
And tell him that I die in deep contrition
For ever having taken what was his.
O, promise me! for I am dying fast;
And tell him it was Accolon of Gaul.

ARTHUR. Ah! thou Sir Accolon, I'd let thee wit
I am that same King Arthur whom thou nam'st,
And it is he with whom thou hast been fighting!

ACCOLON. Alas! what have I done? My gracious Lord,
Have mercy on me, for I knew you not!
I thought it was mine enemy, Sir Lanfal;
So I was told. Beware your sister, Morgan! (*dies.*

MERLIN. Now, let us offer to Almighty God
The gratitude we owe! For, O, Sir King!
You very nearly have escaped death,
And England from untold calamity.

ARTHUR. A near escape it has been, of a truth!
I knew he was connected with my sister,
Too nearly; but I did not deem of this.
He's paid his penalty, and so shall she.

The released LIBERTINES *come from the Castle, and pass over Stage, laughing, boasting, groaning, quarrelling, and emaciated and diseased, in all manners; some prostrate themselves to die.*

MERLIN. Oh, who can look on this, and not resolve
Never to swerve from the principles of virtue!
I' the prime of youth, they die, a self-sought death,
Unhonoured and unmissed! From day to day
Have they been burdens to their generation,
Their families, their country, their age;
And now, when life should have been at its height,
And years of labour found their recompense,
They close their short and wretched being thus.
Alas! poor man, and thy abused nature!
Why, why did ye enflower the path of vice?
No other path than virtue hath its flowers.
(*with much fire, noise, and confusion, the destruction of the Castle takes place, and discovers many bones.*

MERLIN. How dreadful is destruction, even though
It be for benefit! It falls asunder
As if its vast foundations were removed,

And the cement that bound its parts together
Were loosened and dissolved.
Alas! I fear that many are consumed.

All is still—a train of FAYS *with calm and noble air, come over the ruins, planting a flag on the walls; some, with gentle sympathy, proffer the released* LIBERTINES *succour and restoration, but for the most part are refused—at length he who has planted the flag comes forward.*

FAY. Thou hast conducted thee right well, King Arthur,
And we congratulate thee on the issue.
This knot of sensuality and evil,
Of fiends, and libertines, and traitors, is
Destroyed; once more is thy land relieved,
Regenerated, fetterless, and strong.
If thou wouldst be the head of chivalry,
The champion of our holy Christian faith;
If thou wouldst have thy noble English Isle
Distinguished for renown among the nations,
Look well, Sir King, against the return of it.
Preserve the man, the country will be safe;
But useless outlay, sentiment, or fire—
Useless the noblest feelings of the soul,
Without the help of weight, and force and sinew;
Useless precaution 'gainst invasion,
And even victory, if you allow
An enemy i' the blood. Reversing words,
Both argument and arms, and hope and fear
Alike are needless; all things will be safe,
If you preserve the man. If each breast were
A little fortress, and each sinewy arm
An engine to defend your country's honour,
Who, then, should dare to touch your bristling isle?
Let it be even so; thine is the mission.
Let not the farmer's care for his stock—
The gardener's for fruit trees overtop
Thine for the fairest garden of the world,
And the should-be noblest creatures. Oh, my lord,
The fruits and profits of that husbandry!
Sir, wear these laurels, and confirm the love
Of my lord the Prince of Avalon who sends them,
By branding with its merit all that's base,
And pointing the aspiration unto honour,
By uprooting everywhere the germs of frailty

And training those of sternness and of manhood.
ARTHUR. I will endeavour, sir, and humbly thank you.
Exeunt FAYS.
How marvellous it is! Did'st thou not see
A company of noble knights and ladies?
Who can they be?
MERLIN. The Fays of Avalon,
Where knighthood in its purest essence dwells,
And virtue and our holy Christian faith;
And lo, a wreath of laurels from that land,
Presented to you for your deeds to-day.
ARTHUR. And so they said! I thank them heartily,
That they have not considered me unworthy.
MERLIN. Behold the banner waving to the breeze!
I would that motto were impressed as deep
As th' English heart is capable to bear;
That never a thought might enter it again,
But were examined by the check of wisdom.
ARTHUR. "While Castle Laxity shall still be down,
The realm of England shall maintain renown."
I make mine avow to God to effect as much
Unto that end, as in my power lie;
For I perceive, indeed, that we are feeble,
And greatly in want of aid and strengthening.
A noble act makes fifty noble thoughts,
The germs of others; but a feeble act,
An hundred chances unto degradation.
The path of truth can only be ascended
By arduous labour; the attained step
Is a positive good and unassailable;
But if you give yourself to feebleness—
As easy and seductive to the soul
As to the body—reason then neglected
Supplies no hold, no council, no defence,
And down you glide to depth unclimbable.
Short while ago, and these were able men,
Capable of being trained to arms,
And strength in virtue, and eternal honour,
Now are they irretrievably undone.
How weak we are! How easily we grow rank!
How necessary to be on our guard,

Enter PERCIVAL.

To cultivate and cherish noble thoughts!
PERCIVAL. I cannot find Sir Lanfal anywhere.

ARTHUR. And how still more imperative it is
For those who are set over states and peoples,
To consider this, and calculate effect.
PERCIVAL. How marvellous, and awful it has been!
As if the winds brought all their fury on them,
And the earth beneath denied them its support,
The stately battlements, and glittering tops
Did blaze, and crack, and topple into ruin.
And everywhere were phantoms the most strange!
Some fair as angels, some as black as night;
As if the principles of good and evil
Had here contended for the mastery!
MERLIN. Heaven be praised for the issue of it!
This was a stronghold of the powers of evil,
And fairy forces have destroyed it.
The bones you see did once belong to knights,
And ladies that had been beguilèd here,
For, once within the bounds of yonder moat,
No person was permitted to return;
And wit you well, though pleasure revellèd,
And mirth and sensual joy i' the upper rooms,
Not long was it before they paid the price
In the damp and deadly dungeons underneath.
ARTHUR. Gramercy, Merlin, how can they consider
That we are worthy favour and assistance,
Who are related unto such a woman?
But she shall have the justice of a verdict.
Henceforth the administration of the laws
Shall be unswerving, full, and pitiless;
And the slightest taint of falsehood or of weakness
Shall be enough to banish and to burn.
The reaction unto this shall be as great
As the dishonour that has brought it on.
MERLIN. Let me attend unto your wounds, my liege.
ARTHUR. I come, my friend, for I am nearly slain;
And let these wretched people who have yet
A chance of life, be also looked unto.
Come with us, Percival, for thou hast not
Heard the disclosures of Sir Accolon,
Nor of the other later things more strange.
PERCIVAL. I have not, sir; is it Sir Accolon?
O, I had rather than to be a Cæsar,
Know where Sir Lanfal is, and succour him! *Exeunt.*

SCENE V.—*The Gardens at Camelot.*

Enter QUENEVER, MORGAN, TRYAMOUR, DWARF, *&c.*

MORGAN. I have not for a week been in the saddle,
And fain would have a ride so fine a day.
QUENEVER. Well, have a ride, then; I would be alone.
A lady who has suffered as I have,
Requires not to be teazed, you may imagine.
Pray take a ride, and leave the grounds to me.
Sir Lanfal, I expect to come anon,
Whom I am going to question of King Arthur;
And it were useless if we were not private.
MORGAN. Impatient, she! A happy day to you!
And may you find beguilement for your sorrow. *Exit.*
QUENEVER. An ill-timed reason to be quoted for
The opportunity that I devise;
But I would try it fair, not intimate.
Would he were bold in this as other things,
And not so fearful of another's rights!
Whose am I than mine own? and whence the title
To chain me like a dog unto their pleasure?
A thing that they may ever find at home,
However they themselves may please to rove.
DWARF. (*not seen by* QUENEVER.) Very good, of course, as a general rule,
But never meant to bar away exceptions.
QUENEVER. Not it; besides, what loss is possible?
It's only just for once, a trick of blood.
TRY. A bud's a beginning that includes the tree.
QUENEVER. And everyone with all their parts about 'em,
Would find excuse enough within themselves,
Although they kept it back.
DWARF. Of course they would,
Even unto my gentle lord himself.
QUENEVER. I will indulge me in a change for once,
And there'll be never call for an excuse;
Perhaps a pleasure even to my lord,
If I should prove no longer promiseless.
No matter,—
He'll not be backward when he knows I'm willing.
Ah! yonder is he! I shall bungle in it;
Howbeit, I will not withdraw myself
More than unto a more retired part. *Exit.*

TRY. Here comes the vessel freighted with my hopes,
And woeful should I be if it were lost;
But I have confidence he is above
The false light of temptation; and his course
Shaped only by the cynosure of duty.
He is the admiration of the world,

Enter LANFAL.

As well as me; my noble, gallant Lanfal!
LANFAL. She only knows her meaning; Heaven above
Alone can see the close to which it leads!
For me it rests that I be tossed awhile
Between my virtue and my loyalty:
Perhaps I can sustain it pretty well.

Enter EWAINE (*a boy.*)

EWAINE. To have an eye here and an eye there, and yet all the while to be doing nothing and looking nowhere, is rather a difficult task for me. It requires one of more humility than I possess to stoop unto it; yet my father wished me, and he must have reasons. Thus are they then, (certainly there would seem to be something up by the muster that they make)—the queen and the doughty Lanfal—Lady Morgan, my mother, and the seneschal with her maids, as he rather frequently is—the new made knight, Sir Hugh, and two of his friends, I suppose—and scattered and in groups about a dozen more all in the gardens, and not the market-place; and for the most part similarly employed as myself, or seemingly so. Ha! my mother turns a stealthy watch upon the Queen and Lanfal, for they come back, I see. (*hides himself.*) Though in a like employment as myself, she's not in the same interest, I could warrant.

Re-enter QUENEVER *and* LANFAL *in back part of stage, and afterwards* MORGAN *in front.*

QUENEVER. But I imagine you have many ladies
With whom you visit ever and anon;
The unmarried are not ever too reserved.
LANFAL. I beg your pardon, madam—
QUENEVER. Oh, no matter;
I should be worse myself; I blame you not;
I would not fail to have what pleased me;
And had I known of you the other night,
I know not what I should have done (of course

Sleep would have been excuse for anything),
And you would then have had to turn to me,
As a fond and honest husband should.—You wonder!
You did not know that I was half so naughty.
Know you not, Sir Lanfal, that a queen
Is no more than a lady, after all,
And likes companionship? Why did you leave?
The king would not have been a whit the wiser.

LANFAL. Madam, you jest with me, and I cannot join.

QUENEVER. Why not? why fear you? I do press on you,
And peradventure I should not object
To have't returned.

LANFAL. Confound her royalty!
She is as impudent and urgent as
A prostitute; and yet I spurn her not.

QUENEVER. Look what a lovely flower I have found!

LANFAL. This is neither virtuous nor loyal!

QUENEVER. Observe, Sir Lanfal! Why are you so silent?

Exeunt.

MORGAN. I must begone; the couriers of the king
Are not an hour's distance from the place.
I'll leave thee, madam, to thy virtuous grief!
Hint, fawn, and fondle! stammer in thy speech,
Leap in thine action, quiver with emotion,
Until thou hast thy wish, or know'st thou art
A very fool! I hope no more than that.
I've done with flighty fancies; let me have
A thing of substance—a material trust;
And triumph in the striving for a triumph,
Let come what may. Now I will unto Vryence,
For curse me if I stint my proper part,
Although Sir Accolon hath failed his. *Exit.*

EWAINE *comes forward.*

EWAINE. That is my second observation; but a woman envious or a woman angry is a spectacle too common to be boasted of, though I rather imagine it may be the material I am sent to gather. But I'll pass along in my occupation, and after one or two more grand discoveries, carry the total to my waiting father. Stay a bit, there's something more for me.

(*hides again.*

Enter a GROUP OF KNIGHTS.

FIRST. It is unusual, and excites suspicion.

SECOND. But that you dare not muff of. He has thrown

The veriest spell of witchcraft on the queen.
I greatly fear that there is practising
The self-same art that's taken off the king;
And that it will be found out only when
It is too late; but let us watch them closely,
That is the only service we can yield. *Exeunt.*

EWAINE. There's some significance, after all, in this expedition of mine. I think I'll follow Lanfal and the Queen, they seem to be the objects about which all the world is buzzing, and by-the-bye, it'll take me towards my father, where I may discharge myself of the information, and possibly be paid off handsomely for my services. *Exit.*

SCENE VI.—*Another Part of the Gardens.*

Enter QUENEVER, LANFAL, *&c.*

QUENEVER. Why, then, did you intrude into my bed?
I never asked you or let you in.
LANFAL. I've told you, madam, all I know of it;
And that it was entirely on my part
Unlooked for and unwilled; and that I was,
While I was sleeping, taken from the barge,
And placed down where you detected me.
QUENEVER. It's easy for you thus to excuse yourself,
But it remains incomprehensible.
I'll not believe but you had some intention,
And that not quite as honest as you talk of.
LANFAL. What could I have? I serve King Arthur, and,
Sooner than prove unfaithful, I would die.
I also have a lady of mine own,
And one who never ruined nor traduced me;
Nay, one whose plainest maid is fairer than
Are you. What motive you have, I know not;
But fancy 't of a piece with former acts.
Let it be what it may, I'll stand the test;
And neither to King Arthur nor to you,
Through threat or promise, will I prove a traitor! *Exit.*
TRY. Mother of mercy! and our holy Saviour!—
QUENEVER. The fool! Who wants you?
TRY. Who practised purity so lovelily,
Look down upon my good and faithful Lanfal! *Exit.*

QUENEVER. Now, what shall I do?
He will disclose it all unto the king!
DWARF. He may be dead.
QUENEVER. And that would be as well,
For how could I behave towards him now?
Oh, foolish creature! What did I attempt?
Where were my senses and my reason gone?
And what their use, if they do not bestir
Against the traitorous propositions
Our folly offers; but must side with them,
And put me at the mercy of that Lanfal,
That stringent, smileless, stiff precisian.
Have I not had a knowledge of him long?
'Tis but a plaything, reason, for our leisure,
And no more rules our acts than bonnet plumes.
DWARF. But it was hard to do without a husband
When one had only just begun to like 'em.
QUENEVER. But why did he come skulking to my bed,
And pass himself i' the darkness of the night?
I never fancied him, nor asked him there,
Nor gave the smallest provocation for it;
I hated him as much as I loved Arthur;
And that is saying much. No woman breathes
Who loved more, nor loved more faithfully.
Alas! I have withheld my tears too long
For such a loss! Oh, where is he detained?
I used to think of him both night and day,
Before that false-faced knave imposed himself,
To break my faith, and steal my peace from me.
DWARF. He's the proposer by that same intrusion—
The plotter of it all.
QUENEVER. Of course he is;
And he shall bear the merit of the act;
The slightest whisper of it is enough
To make a faggot of him, I know well.
DWARF. You're right—it is. And no one would believe
A word of his 'gainst your integrity.
He merits it—for never kindness was
So basely taken, and ill-naturedly!
But I perceive I shall be superseded,
So pluck your spirits up, my gamesome lady—
There's nothing half so ugly as a fear—
And be avenged.

Enter ATTENDANT.

QUENEVER. And that I will; the traitor!

LADY. God defend us! what has he been doing?
Has he insulted you, my royal lady?
QUENEVER. Has who insulted me? what do you mean?
LADY. Your ladyship looks tremulous and pale,
As if you'd suffered a severe attack
Of illness or affront.
QUENEVER. I'm safe and well,
And beg that you'll concern yourself on things
More open to your sympathies than I am.
I called you not—how dared you to intrude?
You seem to put my royalty aside,
And treat me as you please—the whole of you.
LADY. Beseech you, madam, you will pardon us.
Such strange events take place, that we suspect
The fairest seeming as a villany.
QUENEVER. And you are right in such an argument;
And in your present application;
Sir Lanfal is a villain and a traitor,
Whose valour shall not save him! He shall come
To proof and punishment, like any other;
And peradventure we may hear of Arthur.
EWAINE. (*beside an arbour.*) Oh, father! father! Oh, my father's dead!
Some one has slain my father—he is dead!
2*nd* LADY. Dead, Ewaine! dead! he surely is not dead?
EWAINE. Oh, me! what shall I do? what shall I do?
1*st* LADY. I knew he was a false one. Who could come
A two days' journey in a moment's time?
I thank our God that you've escaped his hands,
For I have been suspicious all along.

Enter KNIGHTS.

GILLIVER. What is there? blood! has he committed murder?
Oh, he's a very devil, is that Lanfal!
QUENEVER. Whoever's done't deserves the extremest law.
Where is Sir Baldwin? Let him do his duty.
GILLIVER. No one but Lanfal is the criminal.
We saw him enter when he left your grace,
In the most excited manner. Did we not?
KNIGHT. Has the man had a quarrel with the king,
Or what can be his motive for the crime?
ANOTHER. To whom does he not bear a rankling breast?
LADY. He'd only just departed from the queen:
I found her fluttered and distressed, as if
He had attempted something upon her;

Which I am sure he did—she says as much ;
So let him be secured, and at once.

GILLIVER. He is a necromancer ! nothing better
Than a false and faithless practiser of evil !

Exit QUENEVER.

He who could act a prince without a yard
Of land to bless himself, a fort or vassal,
Might reasonably have been foredeemed to
Have had conceits more crooked, and acts more monstrous
Than sane men can conceive. I knew full well
That it would end in some outlandish trick.
What he intended to the queen I know not,
But doubtless that his feigned part to her
Was in the furtherance of his designs

HUGH. Go on, prate on about half an hour ;
And if I can't employ me any better,
I'll take the trouble to return to thee,
And prove thee both a liar and a coward :
I wish I had excuse to do it now. *Exit.*

GILLIVER. Any time, good fellow, that thou likest.
But if the law does not arrest him too,
A so much is omitted of precaution.

LADY. Oh, piteous spectacle ! How could he hurt
So unobtrusive, innocent a prince ?

KNIGHT. 'Tis likely that the traitor started terms,
The noble queen indignantly refused ;
And he, enraged, and shamed at his position,
And seeing Vryence had discovered it,
Dispatched him as he passed in retreat.

LADY. Doubtless so ; and the innocent has suffered.
Poor Ewaine ! he will break his heart with grief.
Where is Queen Morgan ? she has not been gone
A half an hour from here. Alas, the loss !
If you do find her, break it gently to her,
Or she will surely suffer from the shock.
I pray you move him softly within doors,
And swage thy grief, my dear child, swage thy grief,
For death's a loss that cannot be amended.

Enter GENTLEMAN.

GENTLEMAN. King Arthur's safe ! A courier has arrived,
Who left him yesterday at time of noon.

SEVERAL. Where is he ? what—where is he ?

GENTLEMAN. He was kept
By the faithless Knight, Sir Accolon of Gaul,

Fought for his life, and slew the traitor after
Severest fighting, and has thus escaped.
The courier's proclaimed it in the court. *Exeunt* SEVERAL.
LADY. Thank God, we are not altogether given
Over to confusion and misfortune.
Bear on the body, gentlemen, I pray ye,
For the sad offices the dead demand
Must be attended to. Oh, poor King Vryence,
But our good lord will see thee well avenged.
EWAINE. Ungrateful woman! O ungrateful act!
I pray that I may never see her more;
For surely I can not restrain myself.

Exeunt

SCENE VII.—*In the Castle of Camelot.*

Enter QUENEVER *and* LADIES.

QUENEVER. The pain of a thousand deaths is not too much;
Nor instant hanging too unjust for it!
LADY. I am astounded with the cruelty
It manifests.
SECOND. From one so quiet, withal!
THIRD. Oh, that was but a mask! Sir Gilliver,
And many others watched all the while,
Expecting something dreadful.
FIRST. Not in vain.
O, full of horror 'tis! But I am glad
Your ladyship escapèd from his hands.
QUENEVER. And well you may! Ye know not half of it.
He is a veritable traitor! The
Most dangerous and deceitful in the world!
I would that he were shot upon the spot!
The act should be rewarded, handsomely.
Ye know not half! It makes me chafe to death,
To think I should be so abused. Oh!
FIRST. O, surely he's secured!
THIRD. The faithless knave!

Enter SERVANT.

SERVANT. May it please ye, ladies, there's intelligence
The king is safe, and coming back anon.

LADIES. The king is safe! O where's the messenger?
SERVANT. I' the court, with my lord, the chancellor, Sir Baldwin,
And all the knights and ladies. Hear the shout!
FIRST. L. O, why do they not bring him to the Queen?
Madam the king is safe! A messenger
Has just arrived with the happy news.
How glad I am!
QUENEVER. Why comes he not to us?
Not one among you cares for our position,
Or gives us e'en respect—no more than Lanfal!

Enter BALDWIN, COURIER, *&c.*

O here they come! What are these tidings, sir?
Is there some information of the King?
BALDWIN. Fair madam, he is safe, and sends his love,
And says that he will be with us as soon
As the wounds which he has taken will allow
Of travelling; and they are doing well.
He has been kept in a secluded castle,
By Accolon, the knight of Lady Morgan's,
An' has fought his way to freedom, maugre all
That cunning and enchantment could effect.
Excalibur an' the scabbard that belongs it,
Was made use of by Accolon, against him,
Which proves the Lady Morgan is not faithful.
QUENEVER. Queen Morgan, think you! Is there no one else
That you can cast suspicion on, but her?
BALDWIN. There is my writ instruction from the King,
And I have acted on't accordingly;
But she hath ridden out with many knights,
And may occasion some pursuit;
Although of course she must and will be captured.
QUENEVER. And what sir, are you doing with Sir Lanfal?
Is he not meritous of being captured?
The one who could transport him from the field
Into his master's chamber—three score miles;
The one who can affront a faithful Queen,
Wherever she retreat in search of quiet;
The one who has embrued his hands in blood,
Within a few yards of our very person,—
Would seem to be a subject for arrest!
BALDWIN. O madam, I was not before informed
Sir Lanfal had designed on your peace;
But of the dreadful murder I have heard,

And a suspicion of the guilty party ;
And now have come to take your council on it.

QUENEVER. To take my council! You should act, my lord.
Unnatural things belong unto enchantment,
And all are guilty who make use of it.

BALDWIN. Pardon me, there shall be no more delay.
This is the person who has brought the news,
Of whom you may learn further of the king.

Exit.

QUENEVER. He would have slain King Arthur, I suppose,
An' inveigled me into the treachery !
Three nights ago he came unto my couch—
Yes, to my couch he came, this virtuous knight!—
Pretending he had been enchanted there !
No doubt himself had wrought upon himself ;
And 'faith he had to walk away as quickly.
Being alone, I deemed not to tell it
Until King Arthur came to my defence ;
But I will not defer it any longer,
A murderer is an enemy to all,
And every one should be his enemy,
Although he be a knight of skill and manhood.
I don't believe Queen Morgan knows of it ;
'Tis Lanfal ; he's the plotter of it all.

LADY. And so he is.

QUENEVER. Bring us the messenger. *Exeunt.*

SCENE VIII.—*A Street.*

Enter LANFAL *and* TRYAMOUR.

TRY. My father sent for thee ; canst thou refuse
The second time of asking? Why so chafed ?

Enter HUGH, *impatient of* TRYAMOUR'S *presence.*

Where is the danger ? what's the loss thou grievest ?
Art thou not faithful to thy lord, King Arthur?
Hast thou not done thy duty unto truth ?

HUGH. Sir Gilliver hath taken his departure,
And therewith saved his bones ; and now I rue
That I deferred the quarrel.

LANFAL. Let me beg
That you will leave us for a little while;
For there is more suspicion on the watch,
Than the justest man i' the world could stand against.
TRY. If so thou wilt, and so it must be, Lanfal;
For I perceive the minister of justice
Approaching with a warrant of arrest.
Adieu, Sir Knight, look forward to the issue.
Blue Heaven guarantees the just event.
HUGH. The danger is too threatening; let us leave
Until the minds of men are disabused.
Our horses are in readiness and wait.
LANFAL. No! I'll abide it; take them to the stable.

Enter BALDWIN *and others.*

BALDWIN. Sir, pardon me; I deem't to be my duty
To secure your person till my lord, King Arthur,
Who happily has been discovered,
Preserved by his own prowess, shall return
To decide upon the justice of the act;
Till when, you stand arrested of high treason.
LANFAL. I am at your command, Sir Chancellor.
I can conceive some motive for this process;
But I am ignorant as innocence
Of any fact that you can base it on.
But did you say King Arthur was recovered?
BALDWIN. Thank God! they both are safe, the King and Queen.
LANFAL. I also say, thank God!
BALDWIN. Sir Accolon,
The base co-partner in the villany
Is slain by the sword he filched to slay King Arthur;
And Morgan will be taken before night,
To answer for her careless guard of it.
LANFAL. I'm satisfied, Sir Baldwin, lead the way.
TRY. Heed not, Sir Lanfal, I will come with thee.
What is a prison unto honesty?
The soul that still retains its inward truth,
Retains the pow r of flight unstraitened,
And everywhere receives unbated welcome.
His dungeon wa ls enclose the universe;
The sun is there, the moon and stars are there,
The freshness of the woods and mountain breeze:
He calls upon them and they minister,
Even as I will come when called upon. *Exeunt*

ACT V.

SCENE I.—*Hall of State at Camelot.*

LORDS, OFFICERS, COUNTRYMEN, *&c.*

1*st* OLD MAN. They are accomplices, in my opinion; although Queen Morgan appears in no way mixed up with it, there is one fact goes very much against her. When she left here to take, as she reckoned, a breathing only, it turned out a positive flight, and on her way she called to see the king, who was then lying ill at an abbey near the place of conflict. Now, just at that time there was no one about—Merlin and Percival had gone to take a bit of a turn in the fresh air, or to do some office of nature, I don't know what. However, under the pretence of a sisterly affection, she got into the chamber and seized the scabbard of Excalibur (his highness was asleep, but held the sword in his hand) and forcedly and vauntingly carried the said scabbard off, slaying two of the sentinels in the scuffle. Now, that proves what else we should not have known, a malice capable of the crime.

2*nd* OLD MAN. Ay, ay; but Lanfal has that malice too, besides being plainly mixed up with it, and caught in the very act. They'll both come in for it, and deservedly. One would have hardly thought this, such a cunning old rogue, eh? But one might have guessed pretty well if we had only rummaged up a thing or two that we have learnt in our time. Weigh me the man wherever you like, who freely and fearlessly acknowledges a dozen or two of his tricks and transgressions against the one who labours that all the people may think him immaculate; and I know how the scales will turn. These close silent chaps were always the worst, and are still.

1*st* OLD MAN. You're right, neighbour; women have been pretty imperial in our time, and many are the fools as well as happy men that they have made; and well it is, sir, that we've had our share of these good things and safely, for in future folk

will have to walk their feet pretty straight, as well as take care of their tongue. The king looks infernally black, and why? Because, between ourselves, he's had a most infernal lesson on the subject. A man that's gone through all the processes of damnation, for however short a time, has cause enough for a shadow on his countenance and stringency in his government, if he thinks it'll do him any good.

2*nd* Old Man. For sure they say he has—don't they? But what beats me most is how he could get back again; do you think he's been down to these nether regions right and in good sooth?

1*st* Old Man. Ay, marry has he! but you see they can't keep them down there unless they've died, and deserved it more than so long.

2*nd* Old Man. They come. If he's had to go through all that which they tell of, he'll make short work of it, you may depend.

Enter Arthur *and* Quenever.

Quenever. I'll have it carried to the extremity.
Remember that the story is abroad,
And everywhere abusing and besieging
My reputation, and encouraging
The envious and malicious into falsehood.

Arthur. My lords and gentlemen, we have assembled
To try a knight for the extremest crimes.
One time he was our fellow and our friend;
I loved and honoured him, and so did you.
I will not say I lean not to him now,
But let that pass, for he has put himself
Without the pale of the willingest assistance,
And we have now another part to act.
When my gratitude for deliverance was strongest,
And Merlin pointed out the flag's device,
"While Castle Laxity shall still be down,
The realm of England shall maintain renown,"
I made my avow to God to effect as much
Unto that end as lay within my power;
When the honour of that fairy wreath was freshest,
I made my avow to God I would not fail
Of the sternest justice even to my sister:
I will not fail to-day; these promises
Were made too lately to be now forgot,
Whatever be the bearings. Call the knight.

Crier. Sir Lanfal, Knight of the Round Table, come into court.

Enter LANFAL.

ARTHUR. You are accused, sir, of several charges,
For any one of which unanswered,
Such is their weight and most atrocious nature,
We must award a serious consequence;
Therefore prepare, and fail not to produce
What arguments you may in your defence.

CLERK. Sir Lanfal, native of the City of Carleon, latterly of the Court of King Arthur, and Member of the Worshipful Fellowship of the Round Table, thou art hereby accused and arraigned of high treason, forasmuch as thou art supposed to have resorted to the evil art of sorcery or enchantments, maugre thine oaths of knighthood and allegiance, to take away the life of our sovereign lord, the noble Prince King Arthur, in order, as is supposed from evidence, to seduce and enjoy our most gracious Queen, Quenever, and wickedly take upon thee the sovereignty of these realms. Thou art also, and in addition—the issue of the foregoing being providentially and otherwise by the nobleness of the Queen, frustrated—suspected and hereby accused of being the cause of and called to answer for the death of the loyal knight and noble King Vryence, of the Land of Gore.

LANFAL. My noble liege, the indictment he has read
Contains the foullest charges vice could merit;
And yet I am as clear and innocent
Of the imputations as a thing unborn.
Others, not you, have put the charges on me,
And therefore you may bring them to decision;
The circumstances told may raise suspicions,
And you may keep from me your former favour;
But since the subject is above a proof,
If you leap not unlawfully to judgment,
It will also be above my condemnation.
Sir, as for any part in the enchantment,
I utterly and scornfully deny it,
And if the faithfullest of your fellowship
Were charged like me, 'twere all that he could do
To say as much. As for the second charge,
I simply say I am not guilty still,
But in this case also am without a proof
As much as in the former case, which was
In its own nature, out of reach of it.

And for the third charge, I've no more to say
Than I have for the others, yet no less
Than they can have to put on me the crime:
I did not do it; what can there be said
In either accusation or defence?
But my bare assertions, I suppose, are useless;
Let me beg the privilege that theirs may be so.

BALDWIN. In simpler cases, may it please your Highness,
Seldom is there a positive proof of guilt;
Much less, then, could we reasonably imagine
The enchanter would leave room for his impeachment;
His dark connexion, and his means of power
Can not be seen, and you can not expect
That we have got a plain detection of them;
But yet we think we can produce to you
Clear inferential evidence enough
To warrant our first charge against the prisoner,
And fix upon him as the criminal.
Short while ago his treasonous tendency
Enforced the displacement of Sir Lanfal;
And th' honest feelings that arose against him,
Drove him at length, to take himself away,
Disgraced, to the city of Carleon.
There he was poor, that he had not the means
To pay a service for his father's soul;
His conduct was divulged, and he was friendless;
And in the cave of night and early morn,
Has he been met revolving dangerous thought,
And muttering things above the course of nature.
A little while, an' the wars came on again;
And who should join King Arthur on the march,
But a knight of passing splendour and of pride,
The same Sir Lanfal who was known so poor!
He never has accounted for this fortune.
He was received to fellowship and favour;
And subsequently, in the starry night,
When no one knew but we were from the foe
A day's march at the least, we were surprised;
And not a soldier in the camp but he
Had time to arm him, to defend his life!
He had had an unearthly visitor that night.
The following day he did prodigiously;
And if he had betrayed us before,
He certainly made somewhat up for it;
But mark the drift: the enchantment came apace,
Whose deep malignity would swallow up

The former aid of twenty thousand knights.
He, too, opposed him to the recreants,
But unlike each of his companions,
Received not e'en the veriest scratch of them.
He also was transported, but to where?
Not to a dungeon, but his sovereign's chamber;
Not to be tried, but to try another.
By the grace of God, and magnanimity
Of our noble king and queen, the whole fell through,
And wrought no evil save unto its plotters,
Whom now I'm bound to pray you to award
With the fit penalty the crime demands.
What motive could there be for this enchantment,
But Lanfal's enmity at his disgrace?
What seems to have been the object of it all,
But the overthrow of King Arthur for Sir Lanfal?
What else can point more strongly to the author,
Than supernatural visitors and fortune?
And lastly, whose behaviour more than Lanfal's
Confirms the imposition of this charge,
Who all forgetful of his place and duty,
Treated the queen with such notorious usage?

PERCIVAL. My royal lord, the defendant at the bar,
Has been a friend to me, and I one to him,
As you've allowed, and know. I am not called
By any office to withhold me now;
Nor yet because I see him in that place
To deem him guilty, (neither yet are you),
And therefore, we remain as we were wont,
Each one a bonded friend unto the other;
And, as I'm able, I shall take his part.
I'm in possession of no further facts,
And scarcely master of those circumstances
Acknowledged, and which we have to consider,
To find a verdict in this strange affair,
But think that I see room for an acquital
In the adjustment merely of what's known.
Myself am well assured that he is guiltless,
And how he has been brought to this position
Is a marvel to our incomprehensive nature.
Although he stands before us as a prisoner,
And the reason of attainder has been given
For all this, there has yet been nothing provèd—
Nothing shown, but all surmised only.
You can't attach to him one certain act
Of falsehood, baseness, or of villany;

His whole life is opposed unto them.
Not for a treasonous tendency at all,
But in devotion to the laws of knighthood,
And for scruples unto duty and religion,
He threw up his position and his honours,
That time that he retired to Carleon.
Why should you think that such a one would stoop
Unto so foul an engine of enchantment?
Endangering his body and his soul,
For the love of a lady he had just before
So firmly, uncompromisingly treated?
Sir, these things are contrasted to each other,
And what you know deny what you attach,
And leave you reasonless for such a course.
The undesired position leads you wrong;
If you examine it, you'll find't to be
No more accusatory than King Arthur's.
His change of place was not his wish; nor Lanfal's.
And if no wilful harm was the result,
Which I have shown to be most probable,
And which no one disproves, Sir Lanfal is
Accused without a cause, and wrongfully.
You fix on him, and strive to prove him guilty,
But, why did you not fix on any other?
On me, for instance? 'twould be just as well,
For an enforced action is not ours,
And that's our only difference. My lord,
Indulge me with a still impartial hearing,
If I do re-direct the eye of quest.
Let us o'errun the history of Queen Morgan.
At convent she was known to be addicted
To the midnight lamp, and abstruse sciences;
Physic and the qualities of herbs,
And magic, and astrology were her study.
The evil and rebellious thoughts this bred,
Fomented animosities and quarrels;
The kindly meant rebuke was spurned, and plainly
Her wilful wicked nature showed itself.
My noble liege returned to his affection,
Brought her to Camelot, and afterwards
Gave her in marriage to the late King Vryence.
The riches and the splendour she displayed
Are unaccounted for, no less than Lanfal's.
She scorned the institutions of the church,
Never confessed, and seldom went to mass;
And kept herself uncompassed by attendants,

With lineages unknown, and whose ill nature
In every way confirmed and flattered hers.
We all know acts of sorcery of hers ;
Her open wickedness and disaffection
To her husband, to King Arthur, to the church ;
Her dark and superhuman skill ; her power
To tell of things beforehand, and how few
Who chanced to fall unto her hate, survived.
All this she has avowed and boasted of.
We know that Castle Laxity was hers :
The remnant that escaped from that place
Have named her the abettor of the revels
And evil customs that prevailed there.
Your highness also has allowed and witnessed
That failing to destroy you by enchantment,
She got herself a bold and stout opponent,
And gave to him the sword, Excalibur,
(The which had been confided to her keeping)
That she might therewith have secured your death.
Thus stands she in the very midst of it :
Why do you fix entirely on Sir Lanfal ?
And if you ask for after confirmation,
Who but the Lady Morgan stole away—
(Just when the murder of her husband had
Been perpetrated, as if she indeed,
Fled from the consequences of the act ;
For she has long disdained and hated him.)
Who, sir, but she stole hastily away,
And with an act of baser villany,
And meaner malice sealèd and confirmed,
The foul enchantment she had found to fail ?
Sir, in the name of Justice, let me ask,
Which seems to be the guiltier of the two ?
The man whose life and character deny it,
Or she whose do approve and coincide ?
The man, of whom you cannot prove there is
One plain connection with the treason done ;
Or she who stands its centre and promoter ?
Why do you fix at all upon Sir Lanfal,
When others are so plainly pointed at ?

ARTHUR. We know the place the Lady Morgan holds ;
That she has been disgraceful unto us,
Deceitful and malicious, for the which
She shall be brought to trial and to judgment,
And according to the censure we can come to,
Shall have award ; but she is not before us ;

Sir Lanfal is the subject of discussion ;
And the evidence produced against the knight,
Is very pointed and condemnatory,
And yet has not been touched on with defence.
We warn the accused, if he do not scorn
To yield an answer, that he speak in time ;
His honour and his life are both at stake.

LANFAL. The life and honour also of another ;
And I agree to suffer from your sentence,
If you in anywise can prove me guilty.

ARTHUR. The friends and the accessories to crime
Are little better than the criminals ;
And little are displaced to share with them,
Or take their stead i' the consequent award.

QUENEVER. Will you deny your stealing to my chamber?
How could you come there but by enchantment?
And why, but with a treasonous intent ?
You'd needs be silent, you have nought to say.

ARTHUR. This count has not been proven, but remains
Unmitigated by Sir Percival,
Although he's drawn attention to another,
And seems to bring her under th' accusation.
We will postpone it till Sir Ontzlake come,
Which I expect will be before we rise,
And equal guilt shall suffer equally.
Proceed unto the second charge, Sir Baldwin.

PAGE. (*to* MERLIN.) Sir, I have been upon the highest tower,
But not on any side can I discern
A thing that's worthy of your lordship's notice.

MERLIN. Thou can'st not? Go another time, good boy.

BALDWIN. The second charge we bring against the prisoner,
Is an attempt upon the sacred person
Of one to whom the highest of respect
And reverence most profound were only due.
Our feelings rise for vengeance at its mention,
And we will not dwell long on its recital.
The evening that succeeded to the battle
That dealt unto King Ryence a defeat,
Sir Lanfal sought, an' intruded on the couch
Of our most noble queen ; and being spurned,
For three days afterwards he practised—
As we infer from all that we can learn—
Both by enchantment and by other means,
To bring his sovereign lady to dishonour.
In necessary prudenceas she thought,
And partly perhaps from grief and female fears,

Being alone and strip of all support,
The queen forbore to make her grievance known,
Enduring no small importunity,
But longing for King Arthur and relief.
Upon the third day, the designing knight
Pressed forward his encroachments, till at length
The patience of the queen would bear no more,
And her royal spirit, fearless of her danger,
Arose and vindicated her position,
Her dignity, her faithfulness, her honour;
And the nature of the traitor is disclosed
In his essay to cover his retreat.
Upon the outraged queen's indignant answer
Unto his knavish propositions, he
Denied the purpose, and with feigned wrath
Declared he had a lady of his own,
"Whose meanest maid was fairer than was she."
If this refers to anything that's human,
A thousand knights will dare him to maintain it;
And if unto some supernatural partner,
It will not greatly aid in his defence.
But be this as it may, it is apparent
Sir Lanfal is a false, unworthy subject,
Without respect unto his oath of knighthood,
And faithless to his sovereign lord, King Arthur.
Sir, either the intrusion on the couch,
Or the aforesaid most disloyal words,
I hold sufficient for this accusation.

PAGE. (*to* MERLIN.) My lord, within a half a mile there is
The fairest company of knights and ladies
That ever eye beheld.

MERLIN. Ah, that is well!
Hie to the gate that there be no delay
In their admittance; this will be thy warrant.

LANFAL. I have denied the spirit of this charge
Once over, and I now repeat it. Never
Have I attempted to seduce the queen;
Nothing has made me faithless to King Arthur;
And no allurement drawn me on to taint
Mine oath of knighthood; but I freely tell you—
Be it for my defence or condemnation—
That I unwittingly was on the couch,
And that I used abruptness in the garden,
For which I have somewhat repented me.

ARTHUR. Repent no more; the penalty of law
Will supersede it. You confess enough

To draw upon you the extremest judgment.
The act is plain, the assertion goes for nothing.
There then would be an end of evidence,
If every culprit could release himself,
On the protestation of unconsciousness.
You are a soldier, Lanfal, I have loved you;
But you have done unjustly, I am judge,
And the law, and not your king condemns you for it;
And that is, to be burned unto death.
Sir Seneschal look to the criminal,
And to the execution of the sentence.

MERLIN. Sir, doubts that touch the justice of a king,
The honour and the life of a fellow knight
Should not be pushed aside. I pray, my lord,
That you will take the council of reflection,
And treat Sir Lanfal not too hastily.
You were transported, and against your will;
Might not, Sir Lanfal, also be the same?
As for the hasty words he is accused of,
'Twas but the bluntness of the soldier which,
At other times has done the state some service.
Besides, in love and knighthood all are equals;
The knight who has most manhood is most worthy;
And the lady who can move us most to love,
Has the right to be considered the most fair.

ARTHUR. Have you not heard his own acknowledgement?

MERLIN. I have, my lord, but you have just allowed
Assertions go for nothing, and I add,
That an unconscious action is as light.
You have not shown the provèd act was wilful,
Nor he confessed, but strenuously denied
It; therefore he has not confessed his guilt,
And you have nothing to convict him on.
For if there was no treasonous intent
Which you may reasonably infer or doubt of,
From what yourself unconsciously did suffer
At the selfsame time, and also seemingly
From the very selfsame influence, then you could not
Call it a plain unquestioned treason, nor
Sufficient evidence to doom a man.
Sir, there are doubts and grave considerations,
That check us from an absolute decision.

ARTHUR. Do you confirm the avowal that you made.

LANFAL. Whatever I have said I do confirm.

ARTHUR. Then, sir, there is an end of argument;

Take off the prisoner as I commanded.
Is it such a sweet to be repeated?

PELLI. My lord, we think you have decided rightly,
For after such admissions 'twere absurd
To give him further time or clemency.

(*All agree in the sentence*, LANFAL *is taken out.*

ARTHUR. I say not that the Lady Morgan's guiltless.
The selfsame justice that I deal Sir Lanfal,
Shall be imposed unflinchingly on her.

PERCIVAL. My liege, we bear no malice to that lady;
But we respect the worthiness of Lanfal.
There is not one in all this crowded court
More true in his intention to your highness,
More loyal to your crown and to your honour
Than I am, yet I will deny this judgment,
And take the freedom to defend my friend.
I hold that Lanfal's honest, and no traitor,
And thatI will maintain as mine own honour.

(*horns heard.*)

ARTHUR. Art thou not satisfied? thou profferedest,
When thou hadst leave to take up his defence,
To second me in judgment and in justice,
If there were any evidence of treason,
And now refusest it—what meanest thou?

PERCIVAL. I'll take the quarrel, or will suffer with him,
For I can not perceive that he his guilty.

PELLI. Then thou wilt take it on thyself, Sir Knight.

PERCIVAL. I take it on me, who is my opponent?

(*many draw.*)

Enter KING OLERON, QUEEN, *and* ATTENDANTS.

MERLIN. My liege, there is another witness coming,
Another judge—behold King Oleron!

OLERON. Success and honour to the good King Arthur!
It seems that we were only just in time
To save Sir Lanfal from untimely death;
'Tis well that he is saved, for he is honest;
Nay, honourably and nobly has he earned
Our highest estimation—not disgrace.

ARTHUR. My lord, if he be honest, it is well;
And if you be the prince, as we are told,
Who in the Isle of Avalon holds sway,
You cannot make mistake.

OLERON. I am that prince!
Narrate to me the premises you've made,

That I may know the point from which to start,
And how to be component unto you,
And I'll proceed to prove his honesty.

ARTHUR. Justice is all we want, and taintless honour ;
If you can reconcile Sir Lanfal to them,
No person will be gladder on't than I.
Three charges have been brought against him, namely,
Of sorcery, seduction, and of murder.
The first was put aside for want of proof ;
The second, that himself confessed and proved,
He is condemned on ; and the third remains.

OLERON. Did he confess unto unfaithfulness ?

ARTHUR. No, he denied it ; but confessed to acts,
And acts are all a judge may go upon,
That could be symptoms only of ill faith.

OLERON. What they were symptoms of, that is their crime,
The motive. But in cases of enchantment,
The act may be without a motive, therefore
An act condemns not always. But ever 'tis
The rule to poise the probabilities
Unto a treacherous intent or not so.
Sir Accolon knew not he fought with you,
How stand the probabilities for Lanfal ?
Is there no fact—no voice upon his side ?
If there be any witnesses unheard,
Let them stand forth and tell what they do know ;
And as they hope not to be wronged themselves,
Let them not wrong an honest knight to-day ;
On peril of their soul's weal, let them not
Refuse allegiance to eternal justice,
Their Sovereign Lord, and all exacting Ruler ;
But as a breeze from off the western hills
Dispels the vapours of the summer noon,
Let them displace suspicion with their voices.
Truth is the life of things, falsehood the death ;
Truth is the light and falsehood is the dark :
Who, then, would not prefer celestial day
Unto bewilderment ? Who will refuse
Nature's alliance sweet for isolation ?
'Tis folly, madness, suicide, my friends.
Truth permeates the rocky core of mountains ;
It dwells i' the darkest depths of ocean ; it
Extends to the circumference of heaven,
And forms the germs of, and developes all things :
Shall it be checked, then, by the frail devices
Of such a thing as man—an ant, a worm,

Nor dare to intrude itself without his leave?
It flows around you like the air you breathe,
But with the force of flame, and claims of all
Imperiously their room or their submission.
Refuse it with the lips, the eye will tell;
Deny it, and the cheek will let it forth;
Oppose it still, and it will overwhelm you,
And you will be an outcast on the world,
And take on you the foulness of your falsehood,
And be companioned by only shame.

(EWAINE *bursts into weeping.*

ARTHUR. Whoever shall from this time forth keep back
The knowledge that they have upon this subject,
Will live a victim to this destiny.
A thousand times more wearisome 'twill be
Than sultry summer to the invalid,
The dearth of indigence, the want of friends,
And altogether with acute despair
Only to bear them. Who will hesitate?

EWAINE. It was not he, my liege, it was not Lanfal;
I saw my mother do the deed herself,
And Lanfal did not kill my father, sir.

ARTHUR. How know'st thou, Ewaine? art thou sure of this?

EWAINE. Ay, sure, my liege, I saw her strike him as
She passed out, but thought to save her name
And reputation from the soil of it;
And that's the reason that I did not tell.

1*st* KNIGHT. She certainly was there about the time,
I'll vouch for that, my lords.

2*nd* KNIGHT. And so can I!

1*st* KNIGHT. And also she had many knights about her,
And seemed not altogether unsuspicious,
As if they meditated some design.

ARTHUR. I was aware my sister and King Vryence
Lived not together in the peace and quiet
That suitably belongs to married life;
And I have long bemourned the sacred banns
That I promoted with the best intention
For mutual weal, but which, unfortunately,
Became productive only of disquiet;
But the bond was made, and alas! I never thought
It could have led unto this sad result.

(QUENEVER *speaks disconnectedly to an* ATTENDANT.

OLERON. Sir Lanfal did not, then, destroy King Vryence
To escape detection of a greater crime;
And so far has young Ewaine aided right,

And never shall he rue the revelation
That he has given of his mother's fault.

QUENEVER. (*to* OLERON.) My lord, the knight did no crime unto me,
And therefore could not shrink from a detection.
If I had known he had not done this murder,
I wouldn't have preferred a word against him,
For I allow he never said or did
More than he well may be excused of.
The truth goes farthest, and I do confess it;
He has been wronged, I have done the wrong,
And I will take the shame upon myself.

ARTHUR. How is it that you alter? were you false?
Or why did you not tell us this before?

QUENEVER. Because I thought that he had slain King Vryence,
And therefore had had treason against me;
But now I do not think but he were honest.
I don't remember me of anything
That may be called a proof of ill intent.
He came into my chamber; by what means
I do not know, nor have I any cause
To disbelieve his ignorance in the matter.
As for his rudeness to me in the garden,
Perchance it also was enforced upon him;
Or irritated by the unjust scandal
That then was passing, he might claim excuse.
But be it as it may, myself excuse him,
And have no reason on mine own account
For his disgrace.

QUEEN OF FAERY. Permit me, madam, to
Congratulate you on your noble frankness.
It is as you conceive—the coil arose
From the influence of enchantment; the
Effect accumulated on Sir Lanfal.
You made the charge—I'm glad that you assume
So readily the service to relieve him.

PELLI. Now good, my liege, the case is different.
I pray you to give lief unto my son
To repeat his counter argument before
Our learned and most exalted visitor;
For though I thought it formerly ill-timed,
And that Sir Lanfal justly was condemned,
It now seems to me more appropriate
And worthy of consideration; for
From whomsoever evidence may draw us,

We are bound to come and also and as much,
Most faithfully to follow on suspicion.

OLERON. Thus, now it stands: the second count's withdrawn,
The third by a conclusive deposition
Has been anticipated and annulled,
And the first one, as you said, was wanting proof;
Then nothing doth remain against Sir Lanfal,
And he has the undoubted right to be
As free as any other man in court.
Such is the influence of Charity!
It turns the blackest prospect in hope,
And painful jealousy to confidence.
Now, as the good King Pellinore proposes,
The young knight may resume his part and try
Who, since not Lanfal, may have been the traitor.

ARTHUR. So be it, let Sir Lanfal be released,

PERCIVAL. My liege, from the additions we have had
Of evidence, and the assistance that
This noble prince has kindly yielded us,
The case must now be plain enough to all.
No person, then, of this assembled court
Has got a word to say against Sir Lanfal,
So just and upright has he ever been?

BALDWIN. If you'll excuse me for a moment, he
Has not explained his wealth and visitor.

PERCIVAL. Of all the insinuations that a lawyer
Could bring against him, there remains but one—
His unexplained wealth and visitor;
This I will leave unto his noble patrons.
I call upon the patients who escaped
The castle of contagion to confirm me;
I call upon the band of gallant knights,
Our late opponents, who have now transferred
Their service and allegiance to King Arthur,
And their belief unto the Cross of Christ;
I call on the companions of his youth,
Th' acquaintance of his manhood;—who is here
To utter a single word with the proof annexed
Against the reputation of Sir Lanfal?
Not one, my lords, can tell of him one fault.
The whole arose from the influence of enchantment,
And peradventure both the words and acts
Were forced on the accuser and accused.

QUENEVER. (*to* LADY.) I certainly did never bear him malice.

Enter LANFAL *and* TRYAMOUR.

PERCIVAL. Sirs, the objection that I have waived
May easily be solved!
ARTHUR. Enough, Sir Knight.
Sir Lanfal, there is no one in this presence
More glad to see you safe than is the Judge
Who but just now condemned you. You are cleared.
Your doom is turned to safety, and our censure
To greater honour: take my best embrace.
LANFAL. Sir, I accept of it, and thankfully.
The course you took was in pursuit of duty,
I no way blame you for it.
ARTHUR. Thank you, sir.
TRY. If I am granted by this solemn court,
I will proceed to give the evidence
The uninformed but faithful friend omitted,
And make complete his noble vindication.
Then I am his defaming visitor,
An' my lady mother has supplied his purse;
His place in the enchantment was designed
For his own destruction more than any other's,
By drawing him to treachery and sin,
And thus opposing him unto his lord.
But as your highness nobly overthrew
Their wicked craft, so Lanfal, not less nobly,
And on my knowledge I can vouch he has
Preserved himself untouched by attaint.
ARTHUR. It is enough. All blame has been removed
From off Sir Lanfal's shoulders, and we feel
Some part hath come to us, and in our turn,
Proffer the plea on which he was released,
Unconsciousness of fault, which now we find
Of more significance. Sir, as you said,
We thought to do our duty;—but you've reached
Above us all in name and in good fortune,
And therefore may despise our late mistakes,
And pardon and forget how we maintained them;
And I will prove you my impersonal aim,
By dealing the same sternness to my sister.
OLERON. (*aside.*) Too late for that, as you will shortly hear.
QUENEVER. I've wronged you much, Sir Lanfal, and regret it;
And if you'll pardon me I'll never speak
Again upon the subject. Can you fully?
(SIR KAY, *having been informed by another, speaks to the* KING.)

LANFAL. Ay, fully, madam, and with all my heart.
And let me beg that you will show your love *Exit* KAY.
In future to my noble Tryamour.
QUENEVER. I hope that she will favour me with hers,
And I will ever strive to merit it.
ARTHUR. Sir Ontzlake, who pursued the Lady Morgan,
Is at the gate, and we shall now be able,
By your assistance, my most noble prince,
To bring the question to a final issue.
OLERON. Truth contradicts not truth, and you will see
That his will be consistent unto ours.

Enter SIR ONTZLAKE *and* KAY.

ARTHUR. Where is the person whom we sent thee for?
For now we know she is the only culprit,
And truth and justice wait to be avenged.
ONTZLAKE. My noble liege, they wait not, it is done.
ARTHUR. Give the account that we may comprehend.
ONTZLAKE. As soon as we had got into their track,
We followed briskly, and within a while,
Obtained the sight of a troop of horse before us;
They soon espied us following, and set off
Along the forest at their utmost pace,
But our fresh horses gained upon them, and
We saw that it were they we looked for.
The queen perceived she could not escape,
And took unto a pass between the hills,
And towards a lake that gathers just beyond;
Then riding easily and turning round,
"Whence are you that pursue us thus?" said she.
I told her we were soldiers of King Arthur,
Whose just command we also would perform;
And called on her to submit herself,
As we should never give up the pursuit,
Until she yielded up the stolen sheath,
And gave herself in charge. She scorned us,
And throwing in the lake the costly scabbard,
Bade us to tell your Highness where it was,
And started off into a quicker pace.
We left some by the lake and chased again;
And where the valley narrows to a gorge,
Impassable to horse, among the grey
And weatherbeaten rocks, they made their stand;
Again I told them what my duty was,
And urged them to submit without compulsion,

And the Lady Morgan, in the front of them,
Stood forth with dignity, and thus replied,
(While smoke began to rise from out the ground
And gradually gather and concentre round them.)
Tell Arthur, though he may be styled a king,
His power never shall extend to me;
Tell him I do deny him and his creeds,
His champions, and purposes, and gods;
And if we and the world be not apart,
Superior and independent of them,
I would they'd show wherein their power lies,
And prove the same to take me; and I rede
That ye do pray them to it or return,
For if ye follow further or attempt us,
I will annihilate you. And thereto
Again she warned us, adding—"Tell King Arthur,
(With what I thought a stammer in her speech),
That he has not yet seen the last of me,
Nor my revenge." We then attacked them,
But so thick had the gathered smoke become,
That all our men were paralysed with wonder,
And it was prudent we should re-collect.
I called retreat, and while we reconsidered
How best to force them, there appeared in front,
Sir Gilliver, as if he would surrender;
He exchanged some angry words with the half seen form
Of the Lady Morgan, and was coming off,
When the volume that enveloped them exploded,
And with a dread report the gathered force
Rolled out among the crags on every side.
I' the centre, where the queen and her knights had stood,
Arose the naked flames of a strong fire;
And every where the hideous forms were seen
Of infernal creatures, making wildest disport,
And adding to its dreadfulness and horror.
Some said they were the attendants of the queen,
Turned to the imps that they were wont to be
Before they came to her, and made this mirth
On being released unto their element.
We know not this, but it was terrible!
Our horses were affrighted unto madness,
And the pulse of fear was heard among the hills.
When we at length found courage to approach,
We found the ashes of a horse and man
About the spot where Gilliver had stood;
But where the troop had taken up their place

Was nothing but a heap of blackened stones.
When we returned, we strived to recover
The scabbard, but in vain. The lake is deep,
And the bottom is too rocky and too dark
To admit of ready search of what is there,
But we had marked the spot for further effort.

PELLI. Now has the question come unto an end,
And dearly has th' offender paid her fault.

ARTHUR. 'Tis even so.

LADY OF LAKE. Here is the sheath, my lord,
Which, with the sword, I formerly did make
For your especial use, well knowing you
Would never put it to a base intent.
I now return it, with an equal faith,
And may you take a better care of it.

ARTHUR. You are too good ; I greatly thank you, madam,
And in the future I will prize it more,
And keep't more carefully.

OLERON. Sir, ere I leave,
Let me impress upon this fellowship,
Not to forget the lessons they have had.
Observe how tortuous is the course of evil,
How inconsistant and how fruitless 'tis,
And how vain and bitter are its best attainments.
The path of truth is straight, and when you fall,
You fall with satisfaction, and with grandeur.
Guard well your conformation ; lay the walls
More carefully than an architect his palace.
Trust not yourself with anything but truth,
Not in a jest, for what you do to-day,
To-morrow constitutes a part of you,
And adds unto your manhood or your shame.
Then cast your minds on feats of manliness,
On th' overthrow of tyranny, and falsehood,
On the pleasure that you find in after mercy,
And fill your days with the works of noble knighthood;
And thereby shall you make yourself a structure,
Firm as the hills, and worshipful as they.
Farewell, we wish you honour and success.

Exeunt OLERON, *&c.*

ARTHUR. Will you not please, my lord King Oleron—
They are departing ! I beseech, you, sirs,
Go gateward with them, for a little way.

Exeunt KNIGHTS.

MERLIN. My noble liege, 'tis bootless, they are gone.
O let us then, conform to their advice,

And swear unto it our eternal troth.
Let us engraft upon our chivalry,
Sobriety, and fortitude, and truth,
Equality, and dignity, and honour,
And England's influence, and the Chrstian faith
Shall grow together, and overspread the world.

ARTHUR. We will endeavour, Merlin, for the best;
Thou shouldst be King, Sir Lanfal, for thou art
The greatest man, and worthiest of us all;
But let us clasp, that wreath is crown enough,
And thou hast got a kingdom in thyself,
Exempt from traitors. Let us to the walls,
And, for a twelve month, we will not be parted

Exeunt.

Thomas Hailes Lacy, Theatrical Bookseller, 89, Strand, London.

LBJ '31

Deacidified using the Bookkeeper process.
Neutralizing agent: Magnesium Oxide
Treatment Date: March 2009

PreservationTechnologies
A WORLD LEADER IN COLLECTIONS PRESERVATION
111 Thomson Park Drive
Cranberry Township, PA 16066
(724) 779-2111

LIBRARY OF CONGRESS
0 014 385 663 A